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# Fadnavis back in the saddle for 3rd time with Shinde, Ajit in tow

## No other ministers were sworn in, Cabinet to be expanded next week

**MUMBAI, 5 DEC**

Scripting a powerful comeback, Devendra Fadnavis on Thursday took oath as Maharashtra Chief Minister, while leaders of the BJP-led Mahayuti alliance, Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar, were sworn in as deputy chief ministers at a grand ceremony in south Mumbai's sprawling Azad Maidan.

Immediately after the ceremony, the triumvirate drove together to Mantralaya, the state secretariat, also in south Mumbai, where Fadnavis, 54, chaired a Cabinet meeting and addressed a press conference.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, several Union ministers and chief ministers of various states besides thousands of supporters of the Mahayuti alliance were present at the ceremony, held almost a fortnight after results of the state Assembly elections were declared on 23 November.

DyCM Eknath Shinde greats Prime Minister Narendra Modi as Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis and DyCM Ajit Pawar look on during the swearing-in ceremony, in Mumbai on Thursday *PHOTO: PTI*

No other ministers were sworn in. The ministry will be expanded next week, ahead of the winter session of state legislature in Nagpur, a BJP leader said.

Signing his first file after taking charge of office, Fadnavis approved a proposal to provide financial assistance of Rs 5 lakh for a patient awaiting bone marrow transplant.

Pune-based Chandrakant Kurhade's wife had sought help from the Chief Minister's relief fund for her husband's treatment.

Fadnavis also called for an "overhaul of political culture" in the state. There should be political communication, he said, referring to the invitation for the swearing in ceremony extended by him to prominent political leaders like Sharad Pawar and Uddhav Thackeray, who did not attend the event.

The state Cabinet, in its first meeting held in the evening, recommended to the Governor that the Assembly session to administer oath to new MLAs be held from 7 to 9 December, and the election of the House Speaker be held on the last day of the session.

Fadnavis emerged as the frontrunner for the top post as he was the face of the BJP's campaign and led the party to victory in 132 seats in the 288-member House.

The BJP-Shiv Sena-NCP 'Mahayuti' coalition has a commanding majority of 230 seats.

Fadnavis, who has served as chief minister twice, led the BJP-Shiv Sena government from 2014 to 2019. After the 2019 elections, when the then Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena broke ties with the BJP over the CM post, Fadnavis was sworn in again with Ajit Pawar as his deputy.

However, that government lasted only 72 hours due to Pawar's failure to secure sufficient support from NCP MLAs. Following a split in the Shiv Sena in 2022, Fadnavis became deputy CM in the Mahayuti government led by Shinde. *—PTI*

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## COPS TIGHTEN VIGIL AS FARMERS SET FOR MARCH TO DELHI

**CHANDIGARH, 5 DEC**

Farmer leader Sarwan Singh Pandher on Thursday said a procession of 101 farmers would embark on a march to Delhi at 1 pm on Friday from the Shambhu border, as the Delhi Police said they were ready to deal with any situation.

"The jatha will march towards Delhi. What the government will do, it is for them to think. We will begin our march towards Delhi at 1 pm from the Shambhu border," Pandher said, adding that even the government trying to stop the march would be a "moral victory" for them.

"Because their leaders have been saying if farmers do not bring tractor trolleys then there should be no objection," he said.

A Delhi Police officer said, "We have planned a significant deployment at the Singhu border on Delhi-Chandigarh highway ahead of farmers' march towards the national capital. We are analysing the situation, and if we get any intelligence input or information about the movement of farmers, the decision will be taken accordingly." *—PTI*

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**'HINDIFICATION OF LAWS'**

## Parl passes bill to replace Aircraft Act

**NEW DELHI, 5 DEC**

Parliament has passed the Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak 2024, a significant bill replacing the 90-year-old Aircraft Act, aimed at enhancing the ease of doing business in India's burgeoning aviation sector. The bill garnered approval via a voice vote in the Rajya Sabha, following its earlier clearance in the Lok Sabha in August.

The legislation seeks to improve safety, regulatory oversight, and consumer protection while aligning with international standards.

However, the name change sparked protests from opposition members, who expressed a preference for an English title, with some suggesting "Indian Aircraft Act" as a more fitting alternative. "Why do so many laws have Hindi names? This is imposition of Hindi. The mandate of the people in 2024 was for diversity, dividend, and the

federal principle but the government is persisting in the 'Hindification' of laws. This is Hindi imposition," Ghose asserted. Critics like AA Raheem (CPI-M) voiced concerns about the growing dominance of major players like Air India and Indigo, which they feel could lead to inflated fares.

In Rajya Sabha, Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu assured former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda about development of Hasan airport in Karnataka on time by April 2025. *—PTI*

***>>>More on Page 3***

## DKS says he will stand by CM like a 'rock'

**HASSAN, 5 DEC**

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Thursday said he will stand by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah like a "rock", until death.

He said this at the 'Jana Kalyana Samavesha', a convention jointly organised by the state Congress and Swabhimanigala Okkuta (federation organisations of oppressed communities) in Hassan on Thursday. The district is a stronghold of JDS supremo and Union Minister HD Deve Gowda.

"Don't worry, in Mysuru I have said that this bande (rock) will be with Siddaramaiah.

Congress supporters during the party's Jan Kalyan rally, in Hassan, Karnataka, on Thursday *PHOTO: SALAR*

This Shivakumar will be with him, now, tomorrow, and until death. Keep this in mind. This is the history of this Kanakapura bande," Shivakumar, who is often referred to as "Kanakapura bande" by local media and supporters, said. Addressing the convention, he said, "It is my duty and Dharma to work honestly, wherever I work."

The convention was initially planned by the federation of organisations of oppressed communities as a Siddaramaiah-centric mega "show of strength" event, in solidarity with the Chief Minister, who is facing allegations in the MUDA site allotment scam. Shivakumar's statement came a day after Siddaramaiah rejected his claim that they have a power-sharing pact. *—PTI*

***>>>More on Page 2***

## GRAP-4 lifted in Delhi after SC says AQI improved

**NEW DELHI, 5 DEC**

The Supreme Court has allowed the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) to downgrade air pollution restrictions in Delhi-NCR from the stringent Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP-4) to stage 2, citing improvements in air quality. The bench led byJustices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih noted that recent data indicated the Air Quality Index (AQI) had remained below 300 for four consecutive days. The court urged the CAQM to incorporate some measures from stage 3 of GRAP should AQI levels exceed 350. Supreme Court pulled up the Delhi government for not paying the full subsistence allowance to construction workers, who went without work due to the curbs imposed to combat air pollution. ***—PTI***

## Internet ban extended till 7 Dec in Manipur

**IMPHAL, 5 DEC**

Manipur government on Thursday extended the suspension of mobile internet for two days in nine districts of the state till 7 December. An order issued by the Home Department said the suspension was extended in Imphal West, Imphal East, Kakching, Bishnupur, Thoubal, Churachandpur, Kangpokpi, Pherzawl and Jiribam till 5.15 pm of 7 December. The Manipur government had conditionally lifted the suspension on broadband services on 19 November, considering the hardships faced by common people, healthcare facilities, educational institutions and other offices. ***—PTI***

## Nations must balance response with civilian safety, EAM to Israel

Countries have right to respond to situations but they should be mindful of civilian casualties and must observe humanitarian laws, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar told Rajya Sabha on Thursday. Jaishankar, speaking in Parliament today, reaffirmed India's long-standing support for a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict. He said India has voted in favour of 10 resolutions concerning Palestine and restrained on 3 in United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

## RUSSIA WILL NOW 'MAKE IN INDIA': PUTIN HAILS INDIA'S POLICY

**MOSCOW, 5 DEC**

Russia will set up manufacturing plants across India, Vladimir Putin said today as he praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his "India-first" policies.

He said companies in his country are eager to set up manufacturing facilities in India, where, he said, "investments are profitable".

Speaking at the 15th VTB Investment Forum in Moscow on Wednesday, Putin said that the Make in India initiative, which is aimed at boosting manufacturing and attracting

*PHOTO: ANI*

foreign investment, has played a key role in strengthening India's position in the global economy.

"Also, the biggest investment in India in the economy to the tune of USD 20 billion by Rosneft happened not long ago," he added. Rosneft is the biggest oil producer company in the Russian Federation. *—PTI*

## UG, PG aspirants can seek admission in any discipline: UGC

**NEW DELHI, 5 DEC**

Aspirants for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in India will soon have greater flexibility in choosing their fields of study, regardless of their previous academic backgrounds. The University Grants Commission (UGC) announced new draft regulations that aim to facilitate admissions across diverse disciplines based on performance in national or university-level entrance examinations.

UGC Chairman Jagadesh Kumar stated that these reforms are designed to enhance inclusivity and promote multidisciplinary education. According to the draft norms, students may now apply for any undergraduate programme, provided they qualify in the relevant entrance exam, irrespective of the subjects they studied in Class 12 or during their undergraduate studies.

Moreover, universities will have the discretion to admit students directly into the second, third, or fourth year of undergraduate programmes and the second year of postgraduate studies, depending on available academic and physical resources, as per the National Credit Framework (NCrF). The UGC also clarified that students would be allowed to pursue two UG or PG programmes concurrently, offering them the chance to switch disciplines and institutions as needed. In a bid to encourage holistic development, students can now earn 50 per cent of their credits in their major field while allocating the rest to skill development or interdisciplinary subjects. *—PTI*

**NEW DAY, NEW FEAT**

## *ISRO puts 2 European satellites into orbit*

**SRIHARIKOTA, 5 DEC**

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Thursday successfully launched onboard a Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) C59 rocket the Proba-3 mission, a solar experiment undertaken by the European Space Agency (ESA).

Around 18 minutes after the lift-off, the two satellites were placed into the "right orbit", said ISRO Chairman S Somanath.

The Proba-3 (Project for Onboard Autonomy) mission consists of twin satellites in which two spacecraft (placed inside the satellites) would fly together as one, maintaining a precise formation down to a single milli-metre to study the Sun's outer atmosphere.

Addressing the scientists at the Mission Control Centre after the launch, Somanath said, "The satellites have been placed in the right orbit, which is a very high elliptical orbit of almost 600km perigee, the closest point to the Earth, and 60,000km at its apogee, the farthest point with an inclination of 59 degree."

"It (the mission) has been precisely achieved in the 61st mission (of PSLV). So, congratulations to the entire PSLV project team as well as the Proba-3 team. We wish all the very best to Proba-3 team for their further operations and in achieving the mission goals," he said.

Earlier, in a social media post, the ISRO said, "Mission success. The PSLV-C59–Proba-3 mission has successfully achieved its launch objectives, deploying ESA satellites into their designated orbit with precision – a testament to the trusted performance of PSLV, the collaboration of NSIL and ISRO and ESA's innovative goals."

"The PSLV-C59–Proba-3 mission reflects the dedication of NSIL, ISRO and ESA teams. This achievement highlights India's critical role in enabling global space innovation.

Together, we continue building bridges in international space collaboration," the ISRO chairman added. *—PTI*

ISRO's launch vehicle PSLV-C59 carrying two satellites of European Space Agency's (ESA) Proba-3 spacecraft lifts off from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, in Sriharikota *PHOTO: PTI*

## ALLU ARJUN BOOKED FOR WOMAN'S DEATH AT 'PUSHPA 2' SCREENING

**HYDERABAD, 5 DEC**

A case was registered against actor Allu Arjun and others in connection with the death of a woman due to asphyxiation as crowds "jostled" at a film theatre during the premiere show of the actor's latest film "Pushpa 2: The Rule", police said on Thursday.

The police registered the case against the actor, his

*PHOTO: IMDB*

security team, and the theatre management. *—PTI*

***>>>More on Page 4***

## 6 cops suspended for accepting bribes to hush up cases

**BENGALURU, 5 DEC**

Six police personnel, including an inspector from Ramamurthy Nagar police station, have been suspended for allegedly accepting bribes to suppress cases of drug peddling and murder. Bengaluru Police Commissioner B Dayananda issued the suspension order on Thursday against Inspector Muthuraj, Sub-Inspector Umesh, Assistant Sub-Inspectors Mahesh and Firoz Khan and Head Constables Mahesh and Basavaraj. The officers face charges of dereliction of duty and misconduct. The action followed a complaint lodged by other officials from the same police station, accusing the six of accepting bribes from suspects linked to murder and drug-related offences. An inquiry was conducted by Additional Commissioner N Satheesh Kumar, who filed a report to the City police chief. The findings revealed that the officers had failed to arrest a suspect in a murder case. —*Salar News*

## Man slits wife's throat over marital dispute

**MYSURU, 5 DEC**

Mysuru police have arrested a man after he surrendered at the city's Hebbal police station and confessed to have killed his 28-year-old wife early on Wednesday. He has been produced before a court and remanded to judicial custody. Police identified the accused as Manu, who resides in Lakshmikanthnagar in the city and works in a tile factory. He admitted to have killed his wife Shruthi by slitting her throat using a sickle in the wee hours of Wednesday while she was sleeping, police said. A team of police led by Hebbal Police Inspector Mallesh N visited the spot, took Shruthi's body for post-mortem and handed it over to her parents. According to the complaint lodged by victim's parents, Shruthi and Manu, who had a love marriage five years ago, used to quarrel frequently . They had a fight before going to sleep on Tuesday. —*Salar News*

## Science exhibition at planetarium begins today

**BENGALURU, 5 DEC**

Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium (JNP) in City is hosting a three-day exhibition titled 'Science In Action' from Friday to Sunday. Featuring innovative science models from schools across the City, the event showcases 25 exhibits selected by the planetarium. The highlights include demonstrations on 'Colourful Electrolysis', 'Viscous Fingering', 'Earthquakes and Resonance' and 'Convection Cells'.The exhibition will be inaugurated by K Sajoo Bhaskaran, Director of Visvesvaraya Industrial and Technological Museum, at 9.30am on Friday. Open to the public and students, the exhibition will run daily from 10.30am to 4.30pm and the entry is free. —*Salar News*

## Food delivery man held for damaging seer's bust

**BENGALURU, 5 DEC**

Girinagar police arrested a food delivery executive for allegedly damaging a bust of late Siddaganga Mutt seer Shivakumara Swami, near Veerabhadra Nagar bus stop in City. Scanning the CCTV footage, police nabbed 34-year-old Shivakrishna, a resident of Byadarahalli in Bengaluru. Shivakrishna had converted to Christianity and was actively involved in preaching the religion, police said. The accused claimed that Jesus Christ had appeared in his dream and instructed him to damage the bust, police said. Archbishop of Bengaluru Peter Machado has condemned the incident. "The act which has rightfully outraged people across communities has no place in our society," he said. —*Salar News*

# Don't indulge in politics of hate, CM tells Deve Gowda

### Cong holds 'Jana Kalyana Samavesha' convention in Hassan

CM Siddaramaiah and DyCM DK Shivakumar take part in Jana Kalyana Samavesha in Hassan on Thursday. A Congress supporter at the convention **PHOTOS: SALAR**

**HASSAN, 5 DEC**

Launching a scathing attack on JD(S) supremo HD Deve Gowda in his native, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday accused the former PM of not allowing others to grow politically, including those from his own Vokkaliga community.

Gowda's time in politics is over, the CM said here and urged the 92-year-old leader not to indulge in "politics of hate and malice" if he wanted to continue. "He has said he will do politics till his last breath. Let him do it, I don't have any objections.

May god give him good health. But, don't speak about finishing someone politically," Siddaramaiah said.

Addressing 'Jana Kalyana Samavesha', a convention jointly organised by State Congress and Swabhimanigala Okkuta (federation organisations of oppressed communities) here, he said, "I want to tell Deve Gowda, by joining hands with the communal forces, you don't have any right to keep your party's name as Janata Dal (Secular)."

Several Congress leaders including Deputy CM DK Shivakumar, AICC General Secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala, Ministers participated in the convention, held at the Vokkaliga bastion of Hassan, which is considered a JD(S) stronghold.

Noting that voters are like god for him, the CM citing party's recent win in the bypolls, gave credit to the party workers, leaders and people, for the win.

"While JD(S) has twice come to power with the help of BJP and Congress, the BJP has always assumed power through the back door with the help of Operation Kamal... have they ever been able to give a stable government?" he wondered.

Highlighting various pro-people, pro-poor schemes and five guarantee schemes of his administration, the Chief Minister sought to know what morality do the BJP and JD(S) have to speak about the poor. —*PTI*

**MUDA CASE**

# HC issues notice to govt on CM's appeal against court order

**BENGALURU, 5 DEC**

High Court on Thursday issued a notice to State government and other respondents on an appeal filed by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah challenging single judge bench's order upholding Governor's decision granting approval for investigation against him in MUDA site allotment case.

The division bench of Chief Justice NV Anjaria and Justice KV Aravind posted the matter for hearing on 25 January, 2025.

On 24 October, the CM filed an appeal before the division bench of the High Court, challenging the decision of a single judge bench, which had come as a setback to him.

Siddaramaiah is facing allegations of illegalities in the allotment of 14 sites to his wife Parvathi BM by Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA).

Advocate Kapil Sibal, representing the State, argued that the Governor lacks the constitutional authority to grant such sanction against a chief minister. Advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, representing Siddaramaiah, argued that the sanction violated Section 17A of Prevention of Corruption Act, which requires preliminary investigation by a police officer. "The Governor is always bound by the advice of the council of ministers. The Governor can only interfere if there is manifest illegality in the council's advice," he added.

Siddaramaiah, his wife, brother-in-law Mallikarjuna Swamy and Devaraju -- from whom Swamy had purchased a land and gifted it to Parvathi -- and others have been named in the FIR registered by the Mysuru-located Lokayukta police establishment on 27 September, following the Special Court order.

Meanwhile, Devaraju, represented by Advocate Dushyant Dave, claimed he had been unnecessarily implicated in the case. The bench assured Devaraju that his concerns would be considered separately. —*PTI*

## RTI ACTIVIST FILES COMPLAINT AGAINST FORMER MUDA COMMISSIONER

**MYSURU, 5 DEC**

RTI activist Snehamayi Krishna has accused former Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) commissioner DB Natesh of engaging in corrupt practices, including misusing funds and making illegal investments. Krishna on Thursday filed a complaint against Natesh with Lokayukta SP TJ Udesha here.

The activist alleged that Natesh appointed his wife DC Rashmi as a director in multiple organisations to channel funds obtained through fraudulent activities. Natesh purchased one acre and 30 guntas near Huyilalu which was valued crores of rupees and a plot at Bogadi in the city. He also amassed wealth through benami and also through his wife, Krishna alleged.

Krishna said he submitted to Lokayukta all supporting documents showing transactions that the former MUDA commissioner made through his wife. The activist said he is also filing a complaint with ED, demanding a CBI probe into the MUDA scam. A case relating to this appeal is coming up for discussion at High Court on 10 December.

Krishna also said he submitted all documents related to sanctioning of alternative sites to BM Parvathi, wife of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, to Lokayukta and all other investigating agencies. —*Salar News*

**'TAKE CONNECTIONS'**

# Illegal extraction, dues crippling BWSSB: DKS

**BENGALURU, 5 DEC**

Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) is crippled by unpaid dues and illegal water extraction, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said on Thursday.

"We are requesting all of them to make connections and pay money. All the legislators are being informed about the present status of this. Because we have to go for loans. When you consider Cauvery Stage VI project, Bengaluru will have better water," he said.

Earlier on 26 October, Ram Prasath Manohar, Chairman of BWSSB, issued a stern warning against individuals illegally demanding extra charges for Cauvery water connections. He emphasised that applicants should apply directly through the official BWSSB online portal and avoid intermediaries. Criminal cases will be filed against anyone misusing the BWSSB name to make illegal monetary demands.

Ram Prasath Manohar said, "Obtaining a Cauvery water connection is a straightforward process. Once applications are submitted online, BWSSB officials will proceed with the necessary steps as per regulations. Demand notices specifying the regulated charges for new connections are issued in accordance with official rules. Upon payment of the legally stipulated charges to the BWSSB bank account, new connections will be provided in a hassle-free manner."

Manohar has directed that criminal cases be filed promptly against anyone demanding amounts above the authorised fees. He said, "To address this issue, a specialised Vigilance Cell has been set up under the Chief Administrative Officer." —*ANI*

# 'Half of road accidents in City due to poor infra'

**BENGALURU, 5 DEC**

Around half (44.8 per cent) of the road accidents reported in Bengaluru were due to poor road infrastructure, according to Accident Index 2024 by ACKO, a tech-first insurance provider in India. Other factors contributing to accidents were traffic rule violations (32.1 per cent), drunken driving (19.7 per cent) and stray animals on the roads (14.8 per cent), according to the data shared by ACKO and Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP).

**30% increase in road accidents in City**

The City recorded 4,974 accidents in 2023, of which 910 resulted in fatalities, BTP said. This number is up from 3,823 in 2022, an increase of 30 per cent in just one year. The number of fatalities in 2022 was 771. In 2021, the City recorded 3,211 accidents and 651 fatalities.

This year as of 31 October, more than 3,969 road accidents have been reported along with 723 fatalities, the BTP said.

Bommanahalli is the leading accident hotspot in the country. Along with Bommanahalli, Kempegowda International Airport Road and Kengeri are the top three accident-prone areas in Bengaluru. These areas are characterised by high traffic density, inadequate traffic management and poor road conditions.

While the number of crashes and fatalities is steadily increasing in Bengaluru, so is the number of vehicles registered each year. As of December 2023, more than 1.14 crore vehicles were registered in the City of which private cars and two-wheelers make up 1.02 crore. —*Salar News*

## ED is Enslaved Directorate & puppet of BJP govt, says Priyank Kharge

Calling Enforcement Directorate an "Enslaved Directorate," Minister Priyank Kharge on Thursday said ED is nothing but "helpless puppets of BJP government".."ED's latest "leaked" fabricated report against CM Siddaramaiah in MUDA case yet again expose BJP's misuse of central agencies as political tools," Kharge posted on X."ED, acting without jurisdiction, has deliberately leaked a report meant for Lokayukta to the media; this is nothing but a disgraceful attempt to prejudice the mind of the court which is hearing the CM's petition. How come BJP4Karnataka State President's money laundering case details aren't out in the public?" he asked. —*ANI*

# State to study TN model on man-animal conflicts

**BENGALURU, 5 DEC**

Karnataka Minister for Forest, Ecology and Environment Eshwar Khandre on Thursday asked forest officials to study the effectiveness of the methods followed by Tamil Nadu in controlling man-animal conflicts.

Noting that Karnataka's elephant population alone stood at 5,395, not to mention bison and wild boars, the minister urged the officials to come up with a comprehensive plan to prevent damage to life and crops.

Kodagu, Hassan, Sakleshpura, Shivamogga, Chikkamagaluru, Bengaluru Rural and Ramanagara are the state's worst-affected districts in terms of man-animal conflicts.

Now, the state is spending Rs 1.5 crore per kilometre for barricading the villages adjoining forested areas using used railway fences. It has already barricaded 312 km, Khandre said.

"But Tamil Nadu is using steel ropes that only cost Rs 45 lakh per kilometre. We should see if the steel ropes can stop the elephants and other wild animals from trespassing," the minister told forest officials, and asked them to submit the report within 10 days. —*PTI*

# NIA RAIDS 16 LOCATIONS IN BJP LEADER MURDER CASE

**NEW DELHI, 5 DEC**

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday conducted searches at 16 locations in Karnataka in connection with its probe into the murder case of BJP leader Praveen Nettaru, officials said.

BJP Yuva Morcha district executive committee member Nettaru was hacked to death in July 2022 by two motorcycle-borne assailants in Bellare village of Dakshina Kannada district. It is suspected that the murder was committed by members of banned outfit Popular Front of India (PFI), they said.

Praveen Nettaru **PHOTO: X**

The NIA had taken over the investigation from the local police on 4 August, 2022. In January 2023, it filed a charge sheet against 21 persons accused in the case —*PTI*

# Parameshwara rejects 'power-sharing pact'

**BENGALURU, 5 DEC**

Home Minister G Parameshwara on Thursday said he was not aware of any power-sharing agreement involving Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy DK Shivakumar before Congress formed the current government.

The home minister's statement has come in the wake of Siddaramaiah on Wednesday rejecting Shivakumar's claim that they have a power-sharing pact.

"We don't know about any agreement. I don't know. I asked two-three people about it, both in Delhi and here. No one was saying that there was an agreement. I don't know the context in which Shivakumar had spoken," Parameshwara said.

G Parameshwara **PHOTO: X**

The chief minister has already ruled out such an agreement, the home minister said. "Such things are not possible," he said. —*PTI*

**SOARING HIGH**

# *Meet India's youngest commercial pilot*

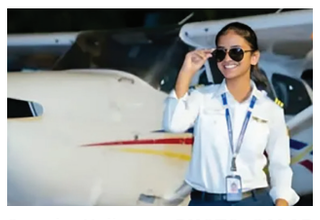
**PRIYANKA SAHARIA**
**BENGALURU, 5 DEC**

At just 18 years, Samaira Hullur, a small-town girl from Vijayapura, has become the youngest in India to obtain Commercial Pilot Licence (CPL).

Obtaining a CPL, allows a pilot to fly aircraft for commercial purposes. It entails meeting several rigorous requirements: being at least 18 years old, holding a valid private pilot licence, accumulating a minimum of 250 hours of flight time, passing a series of written and practical exams and completing a flight test with a certified flight examiner.

A former student of Sishuniketan, Sainik School in Vijayapura, Samaira grew up admiring the disciplined life of defence personnel who frequented her school for functions. Her mother Naziya Hullur, a school teacher in Vijayapura, played a pivotal role in shaping Samaira's aspirations. Naziya recalled an incident at an airport when a pilot with his crew members walked by, receiving admiration and respect from onlookers. Inspired by this, Naziya suggested an aviation career to her daughter.

Speaking to **Salar News**, Samaira said her parents wanted her to pursue a career beyond the typical 9-to-5 routine. They encouraged her to embrace a path that would allow her to travel, meet new people and broaden her horizons. Inspired by Tapesh Kumar, one of India's youngest pilots at 25, Samaira often watched his YouTube vlogs. Samaira moved to Delhi to begin her aviation journey, undeterred by societal scepticism. "Log kya bolte hain, vo sochke (Of thinking what will people say) we should not stop ourselves. Success comes when you keep going despite failures," she said.



Samaira Hullur **PHOTO: SALAR**

She completed her ground school training at Vinod Yadav Aviation Academy in Delhi, clearing all CPL exams in six months. "The mentorship of Captain Tapesh Kumar and academy chief Vinod Yadav was invaluable," she said. Samaira then joined Carver Aviation Academy in Baramati, Maharashtra, for seven months of flight training.

About her next steps, Samaira's father, Ameen Hullur, an interior designer, said: "She will attend interviews for aviation opportunities," he said. —*Salar News*

# Exhibition offers City's sepia-toned memories

**BENGALURU, 5 DEC**

National Gallery of Modern Art is hosting an exhibition titled 'From Bangalore with Love' showcasing over 50 century-old postcards that offers a glimpse into old Bengaluru with its charm and cultural heritage.

The postcards, dating from 1890 to 1910, were originally photographed in Bengaluru, printed in Germany and sold to British residents stationed in the City. Rediscovered years later by UK-based collector Martin Henry, the postcards have returned to Bengaluru through his daughter, photographer Claire Arni.

"Postcards are more than collectibles; they're windows to a City's history," said curator Suresh Jayaram. "They capture architecture, social customs and the picturesque charm of a bygone era."

A postcard depicting Lalbagh **PHOTO: X**

Open daily from 10am to 6pm until 15 December, the exhibition excludes Mondays and national holidays, inviting visitors to reconnect with Bengaluru's fascinating past. —*Salar News*

## BRS MLA arrested for threatening police officer

**HYDERABAD, 5 DEC**

BRS MLA P Kaushik Reddy was arrested on Thursday in connection with a case registered against him for allegedly threatening, abusing, and obstructing a police official, police said. Kaushik Reddy, legislator from Huzurabad constituency, was arrested from his residence in Kondapur here, they said. Some BRS leaders, including former minister T Harish Rao, were detained when they went to meet Reddy. The case was registered against Reddy and others based on the complaint of Banjara Hills Police Station Inspector for the offences of unlawful assembly, using force for obstructing the duties of a public servant and criminal intimidation. —*PTI*

## Wayanad relief row: LDF warns of statewide protest

**T'PURAM, 5 DEC**

The ruling LDF constituents will mobilise the people of Kerala and launch massive protests if the central government continues to neglect the state's demands for the survivors of the Wayanad landslide, CPI(M) state secretary M V Govindan said on Thursday. Inaugurating a massive sit-in protest in front of the Raj Bhavan, Govindan sharply criticised the union government's partisan approach towards Kerala. "Except for the BJP ministers from Kerala and PT Usha, the BJP's Rajya Sabha member, all other MPs have met the Prime Minister and Union Home Minister for Wayanad," Govindan said. He added that the Kerala government had requested special assistance of over Rs 2,200 crore for the rehabilitation effort and had submitted a detailed plan. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

## Shunty joins AAP ahead of Delhi Assembly polls

**NEW DELHI, 5 DEC**

Padma Shri awardee and social worker Jitender Singh Shunty joined the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Thursday ahead of the Delhi Assembly polls slated for February next year. Shunty, the president of the Shaheed Bhagat Singh (SBS) Foundation, gained recognition for his humanitarian efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. He is also the founder of the Shaheed Bhagat Singh Seva Dal, an NGO known for cremating unclaimed bodies and performing post-cremation rites in accordance with Hindu and Sikh traditions. His entry into AAP comes shortly after the retirement of Delhi Assembly Speaker and Shahdara MLA Ram Niwas Goel from electoral politics. Shunty is likely to contest from the Shahdara constituency, where he previously served as an MLA from the BJP in 2013.—*PTI*

## Delhi Speaker Ram Niwas Goel quits electoral politics

**NEW DELHI, 5 DEC**

Outgoing Delhi Assembly Speaker and sitting AAP MLA from Shahdara Ram Niwas Goel has quit electoral politics citing his old age. Kejriwal in a post on X termed Goel's decision an emotional moment. The elections for the 70-member Delhi Assembly are due to be held in February 2025. Goel, 76, has been the Speaker of Delhi Assembly since 2015 and a two-time MLA from the Shahdara constituency in East Delhi. In his letter to Kejriwal, dated 11 November, Goel said he discharged his responsibilities as Shahdara MLA and Speaker of the Assembly for ten years and received a lot of respect for which he was thankful. Kejriwal said Goel's guidance drove the party in the right direction. He will remain a guardian of the AAP family, he added. —*PTI*

# INDIA protest over Adani issue in Parl

## Oppn wears jackets reading 'Modi-Adani Ek Hai'

**NEW DELHI, 5 DEC**

Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and LoP in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi protest against Adani row in New Delhi **PHOTO: PTI**

In an unusual protest, leaders of several INDIA bloc parties wore black jackets with stickers reading "Modi Adani Ek Hai" and "Adani Safe Hai" on them and raised slogans on the Parliament premises to demand a joint parliamentary probe into the Adani issue.

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, who put the sticker on his trademark white T-shirt, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi cannot get an investigation done against Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani as it would amount to getting a probe done against himself.

Congress MPs including Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and lawmakers of several other Opposition parties like RJD and the Left participated in the protest.

Both Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi demanded that a discussion on the indictment of Adani in a US court on charges of bribery and fraud must take place in Parliament and Prime Minister Narendra Modi must speak in the House on the issue.

The protest took place in front of the steps of Parliament's Makar Dwar and not on the steps leading to it as a Lok Sabha Secretariat advisory and Speaker Om Birla had flagged the issue.

A little later, the protesting MPs lined up in front of the Samvidhan Sadan and raised slogans against Modi and Adani there.

The Congress and some other opposition parties have been demanding a joint parliamentary committee (JPC) probe following the indictment of Adani and other company officials in a US court.

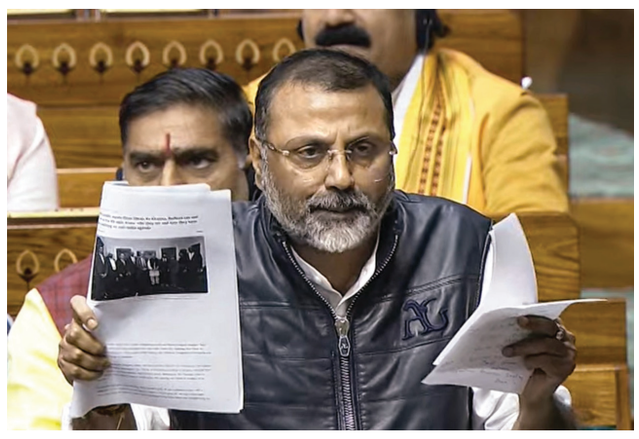
Amid the protest Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla urged members not to sport lapel pins and badges other than the national tricolour in Parliament. Congress MP Manickam Tagore wrote to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Thursday, expressing deep concern over BJP's Sambit Patra allegedly using "slanderous language" against Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi at a media interaction, and sought stringent action against the ruling party leader.

In his letter to Birla, Tagore alleged that Patra's conduct was a "clear violation" of the decorum. —*PTI*

# LS stalled as BJP links Rahul to Soros

## Congress seeks Birla's action on Dubey's claims

**NEW DELHI, 5 DEC**



BJP MP Nishikant Dubey speaks in the Lok Sabha during the Winter session of Parliament, in New Delhi, on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

Lok Sabha proceedings were adjourned twice on Thursday over BJP member Nishikant Dubey's remarks targeting Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi and seeking to link him to a US-based multi-billionaire George Soros.

Raising the issue during Zero Hour at noon, Dubey claimed that the Congress-led Opposition had tried to derail Parliament proceedings following reports in a publication based on findings of the Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) which had alleged links to the billionaire investor.

Congress members strongly objected to Dubey's remarks leading to uproar in the House. As the protests continued, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla adjourned the proceedings till 2 pm.

Similar scenes were witnessed when the House reassembled at 3pm.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rjiju said the behaviour of the opposition was not acceptable.

"They (opposition) came into Parliament wearing colourful clothes, and outside Parliament, they have started a fashion show wearing those colourful clothes. This lowers the dignity of Parliament, and I condemn it. Such disruptions will achieve nothing; it won't fetch votes," Rijiju said.

He was referring to leaders of several INDIA bloc parties wearing black jackets with stickers reading "Modi Adani Ek Hai" and "Adani Safe Hai". The BJP member said the Congress had sought to derail Parliament on various issues published by OCCRP, including the Pegasus spying row, questioning the efficacy of vaccines against COVID-19 developed in India and the Hindenburg reports.

Dubey said several opposition leaders raised the issues flagged in media reports, many of which were published on the eve of Parliament sessions in India.

Hitting out at Dubey Congress on Thursday said "agents of Adani" have been given only one task of defaming and abusing those who expose the conglomerate's "mega corruption".

Oppostion party has called on Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to ensure that Dubey takes back his remarks and apologises. —*PTI*

UP CM Yogi Adityanath equated historical actions of Mughal ruler Babur's army with current events in Bangladesh **PHOTO: PTI**

# Oppn slams Yogi over Babur remarks, terms them divisive

**NEW DELHI, 5 DEC**

The Opposition has strongly criticised Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for his recent comments equating historical actions of Mughal ruler Babur's army with current events in Bangladesh.

Speaking at an event in Ayodhya, Adityanath claimed, "Five hundred years ago, a general of Babur committed certain deeds in Ayodhya, and similar acts occurred in Sambhal. What is happening today in Bangladesh is the same." He accused opposition parties of perpetuating divisive politics and undermining social unity.

Congress MP Tariq Anwar expressed dismay at Adityanath's rhetoric, stating, "It is surprising and saddening that the Chief Minister of such a large state would use language aimed at dividing people." Another Congress MP, Mohammad Javed, highlighted the troubling developments in both Bangladesh and Sambhal, mentioning that innocent lives are being affected and calling for justice after recent violence that resulted in multiple fatalities.

A group of Congress leaders, led by Rahul Gandhi, were recently stopped by Uttar Pradesh police while attempting to visit Sambhal, where prohibitory orders were in place following unrest related to a court-ordered mosque survey.

Meanwhile, Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav said Adityanath should first get his DNA checked, after his remark. Talking to reporters he said, "I don't know how much science the chief minister knows and how much biology he has studied... But I want to request him that he should not talk about DNA".

Congress MP Karti Chidambaram accused BJP of attempting to distort history, urging a focus on current pressing issues rather than revisiting the past. SP MP Dharmendra Yadav also advised BJP to concentrate on pressing local concerns, including healthcare, unemployment. —*PTI*

# 11, including six new faces in J'khand cabinet

**RANCHI, 5 DEC**

Jharkhand Governor Santosh Gangwar and Chief Minister Hemant Soren with JMM leader Kalpana Soren and newly sworn in state Cabinet ministers at Raj Bhavan, Jharkhand on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

Eleven MLAs, including six new faces and two women, were sworn in as ministers in the Hemant Soren government in Jharkhand on Thursday. The oath-taking ceremony took place at Ashok Udyan of the Raj Bhavan, presided over by Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar.

Among the six ministers from the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) are Sudivya Kumar, Deepak Birua, Ramdas Soren, Chamra Linda, Yogendra Prasad, and Hafijul Hasan. The Congress party has four representatives in the cabinet: Deepika Pandey Singh, Shilpi Neha Tirkey, Irfan Ansari, and Radhakrishna Kishore, along with Sanjay Prasad Yadav from the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD).

Following the swearing-in, Chief Minister Hemant Soren expressed confidence that the government would now "gain momentum" and work efficiently. Shilpi Neha Tirkey voiced her gratitude to Congress leadership for the opportunity to serve, while Sudivya Kumar pledged to focus on the state's development. The JMM-led alliance secured 56 seats in the 81-member assembly during last month's elections, marking its second consecutive term in power. The JMM, which contested 43 seats, achieved a historic high by winning 34 constituencies. The Congress party obtained 16 seats, while the BJP managed 21, emerging as the second-largest party. The CPI(ML) Liberation party, which secured two seats, opted out of joining the cabinet. The A ssembly is set for a session from 9-12 December. —*PTI*

# Badal attacker sent to 3-day remand

**CHANDIGARH, 5 DEC**

SAD leader Sukhbir Singh Badal performs sewa outside Takht Kesgarh Sahib in Punjab on Thursday **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

Former terrorist Narain Singh Chaura, who opened fire at Shiromani Akali Dal leader Sukhbir Singh Badal outside the Golden Temple, was sent to a three-day police remand by a court in Amritsar on Thursday. Chaura, 68, who fired but missed Badal, was produced before the court amid tight security. Punjab Police had demanded a seven-day remand, but the court granted it three days', a defence counsel told reporters in Amritsar. Chaura will be produced before the court again on 8 December. The counsel said Chaura has been booked under Section 109 (attempt to murder) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and under sections of the Arms Act.

A day after he survived a bid on his life, Shiromani Akali Dal leader Sukhbir Singh Badal on Thursday performed the duty of 'sewadar' outside Takht Kesgarh Sahib in Punjab's Rupnagar district amid tight security.

The former deputy chief minister, a Z+ protectee, arrived at the Anandpur Sahib shrine surrounded by security personnel.

Dressed in blue 'sewadar' uniform, Badal sat at the entrance of the gurdwara with a spear in one hand for an hour from 9am. —*PTI*

## HIMANTA BISWA TO EXPAND ASSAM CABINET ON 7 DEC

**GUWAHATI, 5 DEC**

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has announced plans to expand his cabinet by appointing four new ministers on 7 December. This expansion will raise the total number of ministers in the council to 20.

In a post on X, Sarma stated, "I am happy to share that the following colleagues will be sworn in as ministers in our cabinet on 7th December at 12 PM: 1. Shri Prasanta Phookan, MLA; 2. Shri Kaushik Rai, MLA; 3. Shri Krishnendu Paul, MLA; 4. Shri Rupesh Goala, MLA. My best wishes to each of them!"

All four new ministers are members of BJP, joining a council that currently comprises of Sarma along with 16 other ministers. —*PTI*

**STAR-STUDDED CEREMONY**

# *Eknath Shinde takes oath as M'rashtra Deputy Chief Minister*

**MUMBAI, 5 DEC**

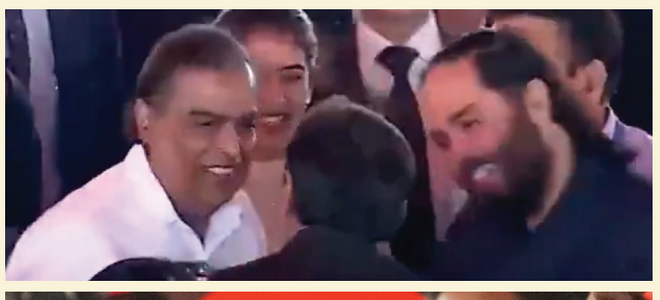
Shiv Sena President Eknath Shinde took oath as a Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra at the swearing-in ceremony here on Thursday.

The announcement, which came hours before the ceremony, ended the uncertainty over the outgoing chief minister's role in the new Mahayuti government led by BJP.

Shinde, who was chief minister in the previous Mahayuti coalition government, was reportedly not happy as he had to cede the top post to the ally BJP, and was reluctant to take the deputy CM post.

Fadnavis, as well as Shiv Sena leaders requested Shinde that he should join the new government as deputy CM, Samant told reporters. There was no friction among the allies, he claimed.

On portfolio distribution, Samant said Fadnavis, Shinde and Ajit will take decisions together. Sanjay Shirsat, another Sena leader, had said earlier this week that the party must get the home portfolio as BJP was getting the top post. But Samant denied that Shinde was putting pressure on BJP over certain portfolios. If Shinde wanted to mount pressure, why would he make a statement that he would accept any decision of Modi and Shah?" he asked. —*PTI*



Industrialist Mukesh Ambani with family; Bihar CM Nitish Kumar, UP CM Yogi Adityanath, Bollywood actors Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan; actors Ranbir Kapoor and Ranveer Singh with former cricketer Sachin Tendulkar and his wife Anjali during the swearing-in ceremony of BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis as Maharashtra Chief Minister, in Mumbai on Thursday **PHOTOS: PTI**

## Elephant falls into septic tank in Kerala, dies

THRISSUR, 5 DEC

A male elephant fell into an old and unused septic tank in Palappilly village near Chalakudy on Thursday morning and later succumbed to the injuries it suffered, forest officials said.The incident occurred around 8.30am, and the elephant died around noon, a forest official said. The elephant is suspected to have died because of neck injuries it sustained when it fell into the septic tank, the official said.M "The exact cause of death can be confirmed only after the autopsy," the official said, adding that the trapped elephant was part of a herd which was pushed back into the forest —*PTI*

## Youth killed, 2 injured in clash over seat on train

AMETHI, 5 DEC

A dispute over seat on the Begampura Express turned violent on Thursday, leaving a 24-year-old man dead and two of his brothers seriously injured, police said. The incident occurred between Lucknow and Nihalgarh stations. Tauhid, a resident of Maderikan, boarded the train Ambala. Police said he had an altercation with a group of youths from Gautampur village in adjoining Sultanpur district over a seat. "The youths attacked Tauhid with a knife and an iron rod, fatally injuring him," a police official said. Before succumbing, Tauhid managed to inform his family, and his brothers Talib and Tausif rushed to Nihalgarh railway station. "Upon arrival, the attackers assaulted them as well," the official said, adding that the accused have been arrested —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

## Naxalites kill 2 ex-sarpanchs in Bijapur

BIJAPUR, 5 DEC

Naxalites have killed two former heads of village panchayats in separate incidents in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, police said on Thursday. The Naxalites claimed in their pamphlets that former sarpanch Suklu Parsa was a BJP worker and accused the other deceased, Sukhram Avlam, of helping cops in setting up a police camp. Parsa was killed on Wednesday in Bhairamgarh police station limits, while Avlam was murdered the same day in Naimed area, an official here said. With these incidents, Naxalites have killed at least 55 persons so far this year in the state's Bastar division comprising seven districts, including Bijapur, according to police. Notably, nine BJP leaders were killed between January 2022 and April 2023. —*PTI*

## School head held for hiding minor's molestation

THANE, 5 DEC

The head teacher of a private school at Mumbra in Maharashtra's Thane district has been arrested for allegedly not informing police about the molestation of a 10-year-old girl on Tuesday morning, the police said.The victim, student of Class V, was alone in her classroom when the man allegedly molested her, an official from Mumbra police station said. Frightened, the girl raised an alarm and the man fled. The head teacher reached the spot and spoke to the girl. As per the FIR, the headmistress was later seen talking to the culprit.A case was filed against the man and the head teacher – for not reporting the incident – after the girl informed her parents. Based on the complaint, the headmistress was arrested —*PTI*

# Cops try to dissuade ryots ahead of march

### Govt imposes prohibitory orders ahead of stir

DELHI CHALO

Farmers at Shambhu border, a day before commencement of farmers' 'Delhi Chalo' march, in Patiala, Punjab on Thursday PHOTO: PTI

CHANDIGARH, 5 DEC

Punjab Police met with farmer leaders at the Shambhu border on Thursday, just a day before their planned march to Delhi. Organised by the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (non-political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha, farmers are advocating for a legal guarantee of the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for crops, among other demands.

Deputy Inspector General of Police Mandeep Singh Sidhu, along with Senior Superintendent of Police Patiala, Nanak Singh, assured that farmer leaders Sarwan Singh Pandher and Surjit Singh Phul committed to a peaceful demonstration, confirming that the march would proceed on foot without tractor-trolleys.

Since 13 February, farmers have been camped at the Shambhu and Khanauri border points between Punjab and Haryana, following a halt to their previous march to Delhi by security forces. The Ambala administration urged farmers to reconsider their march and advised them to obtain permission from the Delhi Police. Local authorities have imposed Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, which restricts gatherings of more than five people in the district and issued notices to farmer leaders.

Farmers are not only demanding the MSP but also seeking a waiver on farm debts, pensions for agricultural workers, a halt to electricity tariff hikes, and withdrawal of police cases related to past protests, including those linked to the 2021 Lakhimpur Kheri violence. They also seek reinstatement of the Land Acquisition Act of 2013 and compensation for the families of farmers who died during earlier agitations. —*PTI*

## 88 BOOKED FOR BID TO HOLD 'RE-POLL' WITH BALLOT PAPERS

PUNE, 5 DEC

Police have filed a case against Uttam Jankar, the leader of the Nationalist Congress Party (Sharad Pawar faction), and 88 others following an attempted unauthorised "re-election" in Markadwadi village, Solapur district. This action comes after a prior complaint against over 200 individuals for violating prohibitory orders.

On Wednesday, Jankar, who secured victory in the recent Maharashtra assembly elections, was charged with unlawful assembly and disobeying orders from a public servant, among other offences under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

On Tuesday morning, between 250 to 300 villagers gathered to conduct a "repoll" using ballot papers, raising concerns over the legitimacy of votes cast through electronic voting machines (EVMs) at a local polling booth. This initiative stemmed from doubts regarding the vote count favouring Jankar, despite his win over BJP's Ram Satpute by 13,147 votes.

The Solapur district administration had denied permission for the re-poll and imposed prohibitory measures against unlawful assemblies.

After intervention from police, who clarified legal consequences, the villagers abandoned their re-election plans and returned the polling material.

Police held meetings with Jankar and villagers and explained to them the legal procedures and warned of registering cases, officials had said.

Later, the residents relented and cancelled their plans to conduct the "repoll". —*PTI*

AHEAD OF BABRI ANNIVERSARY

Security personnel and forensic experts conduct searches near the Shahi Jama Masjid, in violence-hit Sambhal PHOTO: PTI

# Posters of 400 Sambhal accused to be put up soon

SAMBHAL/MORADABAD, 5 DEC

In the wake of violent clashes on 24 November, district authorities in Sambhal have announced plans to display posters of individuals allegedly involved in the unrest. District Magistrate Rajender Pensiya confirmed that more than 400 people have been identified in connection with the incident, which erupted during a survey of a local mosque and resulted in significant damage estimated at over Rs 1 crore.

Pensiya stated that the posters would be put up "after excluding those who have been arrested," focusing on individuals identified through photographs. So far, 34 arrests have been made, with ongoing efforts to apprehend the remaining suspects.

Superintendent of Police (SP) Krishna Kumar Bishnoi revealed that the damages include burnt transformers and destroyed vehicles, asserting that compensation will be sought from the identified rioters. Bishnoi also indicated that police have sought public assistance in identifying those in masks from the released images. As 6 December approaches—an important date marking the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992—the administration is taking precautions to ensure peace.

**Protest over house sale to Muslim**

Protests broke out in a residential colony in the city on Thursday, allegedly over the sale of a house to a Muslim. Slogans were raised by the members of the housing society after they came to know that one Dr Ashok Bajaj sold his house to Dr Ikra Chaudhary. Residents held a demonstration at the colony gate, holding banners that said "Dr Ashok Bajaj, apna makan wapas lo". Both, the buyer and the seller, were not available for comments. —*PTI*

## Delhi HC CJ takes oath as SC judge

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna on Thursday administered oath of office to Delhi High Court Chief Justice Manmohan as a judge of the Supreme Court.

With the swearing-in of Justice Manmohan, 65, the working strength of the apex court has risen to 33 against the sanctioned 34 judges, including the CJI.

The Supreme Court collegium had on 28 November recommended the elevation of Justice Manmohan to the top court. He was appointed as a judge of the apex court on 3 December.

"In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (2) of Article 124 of the Constitution of India, the President is pleased to appoint Shri Justice Manmohan, Chief Justice, High Court of Delhi, to be a Judge of the Supreme Court of India, with effect from the date he assumes charge of his office," read the official notification.

Justice Manmohan stood at serial number two in the combined all-India seniority of high court judges.

"While recommending his name, the collegium has taken into consideration the fact that, at present, the bench of Supreme Court is represented by only one judge from the High Court of Delhi," read the apex court collegium's statement proposing his name —*PTI*

High Court Chief Justice Manmohan PHOTO: PTI

### SC quashes defamation case against Murugan

In a significant relief for Union Minister L Murugan, the Supreme Court has quashed criminal defamation proceedings initiated by the Chennai-based Murasoli Trust following alleged defamatory remarks made by him at a December 2020 press conference. The bench, comprising Justices B R Gavai and K V Viswanathan, acknowledged that Murugan had no intention to harm the Trust's reputation.

## Hyd woman killed, son injured in stampede at 'Pushpa 2' screening

HYDERABAD, 5 DEC

A 35-year-old woman was killed and her nine-year-old son was seriously injured during the premiere of 'Pushpa 2: The Rule' at a theatre in Hyderabad Wednesday evening, police said. Reports indicate that an overwhelming number of fans gathered at the theatre, hoping to catch a glimpse of the actor, leading to a stampede-like situation. The woman's husband recounted the harrowing scene, stating that the theatre was unprepared for the massive turnout, which contributed to the chaos.

According to police, as the crowd surged forward, the woman and her son were pushed, resulting in their suffocation.

PHOTO: PTI

Emergency responders, including police personnel, administered Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) before transporting them to a hospital, where the woman succumbed to her injuries. Her son remains in critical condition, with doctors indicating that his health status would be assessed in 48 hours. Authorities noted the lack of crowd control measures at the venue and have initiated an investigation into the incident, with a case filed against those responsible. Police also used mild force to disperse the crowd to restore order at the scene —*PTI*

# Delhi HC grants bail to Unnao rape convict

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

The Delhi High Court on Thursday granted a two-week interim bail on medical grounds to expelled BJP leader Kuldeep Singh Sengar who is serving life term for raping a minor in Uttar Pradesh's Unnao in 2017.

A bench headed by Justice Prathiba M Singh suspended the sentence for the time being and directed that Sengar be admitted to AIIMS-Delhi for his medical evaluation and must remain in the capital once discharged.

"Considering the history of the case as also the medical condition of the applicant, it is directed that the applicant will be released on interim bail for two weeks and he shall seek admission in AIIMS Delhi for a comprehensive medical evaluation," the bench, also comprising Justice Amit Sharma, said.

The court sought a report from the medical board of AIIMS and listed the matter for hearing on 20 December.

Sengar is also serving a 10-year jail term in connection with the custodial death of the Unnao rape victim's father. His plea for interim bail in that case is still pending before another bench of the high court.

Sengar sought interim bail on the grounds that he was suffering from various ailments, like cataract, that required urgent attention.

The plea was opposed by the victim's lawyer as well as the CBI.

The girl was raped by Sengar in 2017 when she was a minor. —*PTI*

Delhi HC grants interim bail to Unnao rape convict Kuldeep Singh Sengar on medical grounds PHOTO: PTI

## Parents of RG Kar victim flay BJP for 'indifference'

KOLKATA, 5 DEC

The parents of the doctor, who was raped and murdered at state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital about four months back, on Thursday expressed unhappiness over the role of the Opposition BJP in demanding justice for their daughter

They also said that they would hit the street over the issue.

Her mother said the reinstatement of some of the junior doctors, who are accused of patronising a threat culture in state medical colleges, in the West Bengal Medical Council, raised doubt about the intent to bring to book all those responsible for the incident.

"But we will not sit indoors. Even if someone is under the impression that the movement for Abhaya (the symbolic name given to the deceased RG Kar medic) will fizzle out, we will not let that happen. Our friends will not let that happen," she said.

PHOTO: PTI

The parents had visited BJP MLAs including Leader of the Opposition Suvendu Adhikari in the assembly on November 26.

"We must keep political interests aside and seek the truth behind the incident. We demand exemplary punishment for those behind the crime," Adhikari had said —*PTI*

SUNKEN VESSEL

# *Pak helps ICG save 12 in Arabian sea*

PORBANDAR, 5 DEC

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) successfully rescued 12 crew members from a sinking merchant vessel in the north Arabian Sea, following a collaborative operation with the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA). The vessel, 'MSV Al Piranpir', was en route from Porbandar, Gujarat, to Bandar Abbas port in Iran when it sank outside Indian waters on Wednesday.

The ICG reported that the vessel, which departed on 2 December with general cargo, encountered rough seas leading to flooding and ultimately sank early Wednesday morning. A distress call was received by the ICG's Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) in Mumbai, prompting immediate action. ICG ship Sarthak was diverted to the location, while MRCC Pakistan was informed to alert nearby mariners. The operation involved continuous communication between both nations' rescue coordination centres. The Sarthak conducted extensive searches approximately 270 km west of Dwarka and located the crew members who had abandoned the vessel and taken refuge in a small dinghy. The rescued crew members were examined by medical personnel aboard the Sarthak and were reported to be in good health. They are now being transported back to Porbandar harbour. The PMSA confirmed the operation's success, stating that its MRCC received an urgent request for assistance from Mumbai, leading to an immediate response that included deploying an aircraft and alerting nearby commercial vessels. —*PTI*

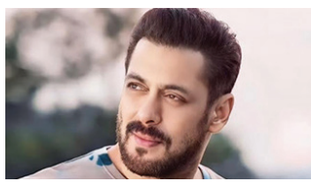
Crew members of the ship Al Piranpir, which sank in Arabian Sea, were rescued by ICG PHOTO: PTI

## Man threatens Salman's bodyguard on set, detained

MUMBAI, 5 DEC

A man was detained after he allegedly threatened a bodyguard on the set of Bollywood actor Salman Khan's upcoming film in Shivaji Park on Wednesday. Khan was not present at the time of the incident.

According to police, the accused—who is identified as a junior artist in the film industry—entered the set when a bodyguard stopped him to inquire about his presence. An argument ensued, during which the man invoked the name of jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi while issuing threats.Shivaji Park police took the man into custody and registered a non-cognisable (NC) case for criminal intimidation . Preliminary investigations suggest that the accused and the bodyguard were acquainted and had prior disputes. In cases classified as non-cognisable, police are unable to file a FIR or make arrests without a court order. Salman Khan, aged 58, has faced numerous threats from the Bishnoi gang in the past, including an incident in April where gang members allegedly opened fire outside his home. —*PTI*



**REMEMBERING 'AMMA'**

An AIADMK worker at former Tamil Nadu chief minister J Jayalalitha's memorial to pay her tribute on her death anniversary, in Chennai on Thursday. The six-times chief minister who was fondly called as Amma died on 5 December, 2016 ***PHOTO: PTI***

# Attacks on Hindus in B'desh sparks WB political debate

The ongoing attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh have reignited debates on minority rights, communal harmony, and the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in West Bengal, with both the ruling TMC and opposition BJP using the issue to advance their political agendas, highlighting its growing influence on the state's political landscape.

Since Sheikh Hasina ouster in August following student's unrest, widespread violence against Bangladesh's Hindu minority — marked by vandalised temples, burned homes and growing fear — has left the community increasingly vulnerable.

The situation worsened with the arrest of monk Chinmoy Krishna Das, spokesperson of Bangladesh Sammilita Sanatani Jagran Jote, who was detained en route to a rally advocating minority rights last week.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee condemned the attacks but has carefully avoided inflaming communal tensions within the state.

Accusing BJP of politicising the issue, Banerjee called on the Union government to take strong action and urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to intervene in bringing back persecuted Indians from Bangladesh. While clarifying that she had no official jurisdiction over the matter, she urged the Ministry of External Affairs to engage with Bangladesh authorities and, if necessary, with the UN.

She questioned, "What was the central government doing all these years when the Hindu population was going down in Bangladesh?" and called for immediate action, stating, "I want the central government to take steps to protect Hindus in Bangladesh."

TMC General Secretary Kunal Ghosh accused the BJP of using the violence in Bangladesh as a "political weapon" to polarise voters.

TMC has emphasised that communal harmony must be preserved within West Bengal, underscoring the state's tradition of secularism.

Since Sheikh Hasina ouster in August, widespread violence against Bangladesh's Hindu minority marked by vandalised temples, burned homes and growing fear has left the community increasingly vulnerable ***PHOTO: PTI***

West Bengal shares a 2,217-km border with Bangladesh.

BJP, meanwhile, has ramped up its rhetoric, accusing the TMC of failing to protect the interests of Hindus in West Bengal and turning a blind eye to their plight in Bangladesh.

"The violence against Hindus in Bangladesh is not just a Bangladeshi issue. It is a humanitarian crisis that directly impacts Bengal. TMC's silence and appeasement politics are a betrayal of the Hindu community," BJP state president and Union minister Sukanta Majumdar said. BJP has organised protests across the state, calling for a more robust response from the Indian government to safeguard the rights of Hindus in Bangladesh. Leader of Opposition Suvendu Adhikari asserted that the unrest would have a "definite impact" on West Bengal. "Wherever Hindus are attacked, we will fight for justice. The TMC's opposition to the CAA shows their appeasement agenda," Adhikari said. He questioned the chief minister's will to protect the life and livelihood of persecuted Hindus across the border. BJP has organised statewide protests against attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) has also intensified its agitation, holding demonstrations in districts with large Hindu refugee populations. The issue has also brought other opposition parties into the fray. The Left Front and Congress have criticized both the TMC and BJP for politicising the plight of minorities in Bangladesh.

"This is a humanitarian issue, not a political football. Instead of playing blame games, both the state and central governments must work together to ensure the safety of minorities on both sides of the border," said Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury.

"Communal violence anywhere in the region can have a cascading effect here. Political parties must act responsibly and prioritise humanitarian aid," said political analyst Biswanath Chakraborty.

"The violence has added a new dimension to West Bengal's politics. It reflects the interconnectedness of the region's socio-political fabric," Chakraborty said.

Protests at the India-Bangladesh border have intensified, with monks from the Akhil Bharatiya Sant Samiti staging a demonstration at Petrapole in North 24 Parganas demanding the immediate release of Chinmoy Krishna Das and an end to attacks on Hindus.

The Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha has condemned the recent attacks, calling for a boycott of Bangladeshi Muslims visiting West Bengal and urging Indians to deny services and accommodation to Bangladeshi citizens until the country apologises for the alleged desecration of the Indian flag. *—PTI*

**LETTERS** write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR سالار

# Why Trump and Fed could clash in the coming years

President-elect Donald Trump campaigned on the promise that his policies would reduce high borrowing costs and lighten the financial burden on American households.

But what if, as many economists expect, interest rates remain elevated, well above their pre-pandemic lows?

Trump could point a finger at the Federal Reserve, and in particular at its chair, Jerome Powell, whom Trump himself nominated to lead the Fed. During his first term, Trump repeatedly and publicly ridiculed the Powell Fed, complaining that it kept interest rates too high. Trump's attacks on the Fed raised widespread concern about political interference in the Fed's policymaking.

Political clashes might be inevitable in the next four years. Trump's proposals to cut taxes and impose steep and widespread tariffs are a recipe for high inflation in an economy operating at close to full capacity. And if inflation were to reaccelerate, the Fed would need to keep interest rates high.

**Why is there so much concern that Trump will fight Powell?**

Because Powell won't necessarily cut rates as much as Trump will want. And even if Powell reduces the Fed's benchmark rate, Trump's own policies could keep other borrowing costs — like mortgage rates — elevated.

The sharply higher tariffs that Trump has vowed to impose could worsen inflation. And if tax cuts on things like tips and overtime pay — another Trump promise — quickened economic growth, that, too, could fan inflationary pressures. The Fed would likely respond by slowing or stopping its rate cuts, thereby thwarting Trump's promises of lower borrowing rates.

The central bank might even raise rates if inflation worsened.

"The risk of conflict between the Trump administration and the Fed is very high," Olivier Blanchard, former top economist at the International Monetary Fund, said recently. If the Fed hikes rates, "it will stand in the way of what the Trump administration wants."

**But isn't the Federal Reserve cutting rates?**

Yes, but with the economy sturdier than expected, the Fed's policymakers may cut rates only a few more times — fewer than had been anticipated just a month or two ago.

And those rate cuts might not reduce borrowing costs for consumers and businesses very much. The Fed's key short-term rate can influence rates for credit cards, small businesses and some other loans. But it has no direct control over longer-term interest rates. These include the yield on the 10-year Treasury note, which affects mortgage rates. The 10-year Treasury yield is shaped by investors' expectations of future inflation, economic growth and interest rates as well as by supply and demand for Treasuries. An example occurred this year. The 10-year yield fell in late summer in anticipation of a Fed rate cut. Yet once the first rate cut occurred on September 18, longer term rates didn't fall. Instead, they began to rise again, partly in anticipation of faster economic growth.

Trump has also proposed a variety of tax cuts that could swell the deficit.Even if Trump doesn't technically force the Fed to do anything, his persistent criticism could still cause problems. If markets, economists and business leaders no longer think the Fed is operating independently and instead is being pushed around by the president, they'll lose confidence in the Fed's ability to control inflation.

**Could Trump just fire Powell?**

He can try, but it would likely lead to a prolonged legal battle that could even end up at the Supreme Court. At a November news conference, Powell made clear that he believes the president doesn't have legal authority to do so.

Most experts think Powell would prevail in the courts. And from the Trump administration's perspective, such a fight might not be worth it. Powell's term ends in May 2026, when the White House could nominate a new chair. It is also likely that the stock market would tumble if Trump attempted such a brazen move. Financial markets might also react negatively if Trump is seen as appointing a loyalist as Fed chair to replace Powell in 2026.

**Haven't previous presidents criticized the Fed?**

Yes, and in the most egregious cases, it led to stubbornly high inflation. Notably, President Richard Nixon pressured Fed Chair Arthur Burns to reduce interest rates in 1971, as Nixon sought re-election next year, which the Fed did. Economists blame Burns' failure to keep rates sufficiently high for contributing to the entrenched inflation of the 1970s and early 1980s. *—PTI*

US-president elect Donald Trump has proposed a variety of tax cuts that could swell deficit ***PHOTO: PTI***

# *Amid chaos, France might consider a new Left-leaning govt*

France's minority government led by Right-wing Prime Minister Michel Barnier has been ousted in a no-confidence vote, the latest shock to the country's deadlocked political system in a turbulent six months.

The no confidence vote was supported by an unlikely, sizeable coalition of French MPs from the Far-Left, Left and Far-Right.

The move comes after a Barnier government challenge to the French lower house, the National Assembly. With the National Assembly not likely to support Barnier's proposed 2025 budget, he used his executive powers to pass the measure into law without a parliamentary vote.

In response to the move, the two largest political groupings in the assembly, the New Popular Front (left and far left) and the National Rally (far right), proposed a vote of no confidence.

The two blocs represent a majority of the 577 MPs in the assembly, so they easily had the votes to oust Barnier's government.

The last successful vote of no confidence happened 62 years ago. Now, President Emmanuel Macron must reckon with the latest challenge to his beleaguered leadership: appointing a new prime minister who in turn will appoint a new cabinet.

While the Far-Left and Far-Right would like to see Macron resign as well, nothing so far indicates he would do this. He is not due to face re-election until 2027.

The Barnier government was appointed by Macron three months ago, based on a narrow calculation following a snap parliamentary election.

Macron triggered the election in June and July in an attempt to strengthen his fragile majority in the assembly. Instead, he lost his majority and found himself with a new legislature even more divided than it was before.

Although an alliance of left-wing parties called the New Popular Front came in first, it did not have enough MPs to hold a majority and form government. Nor did Marine Le Pen's Far-Right party, the National Rally, which got the second-highest number of seats.

To address the situation, Macron united political parties of the centre and moderate right to appoint Barnier, a move that dismayed a significant number of French voters who had supported either the left or far right.

Barnier's government has therefore always been fragile and its downfall was always very likely. However, his government fell at its big first legislative hurdle: passing next year's budget.

The no confidence vote was supported by an unlikely, sizeable coalition of French MPs from the Far-Left, Left and Far-Right ***PHOTO: PTI***

As per the French Constitution, the National Assembly cannot be dissolved until July 2025, meaning France's political landscape will remain precarious until then.

Two scenarios are likely and a third one possible.

First, Macron could try to cobble together a new majority to support his centrist MPs and his political agenda. To do this, he'd have to appeal to MPs from the traditional, conservative right and centre left at the same time, perhaps appointing a prime minister from among them as a negotiating chip.

The moderate left-wing MPs he needs, however, are unlikely to support him. They have more to gain in sticking with the alliance they have formed: the New Popular Front. This alliance is made up of left-wing parties (the Greens, Socialists, Democrats and more) that could implement a real leftist agenda of reforms, if they found a way to work together.

This brings up the second possible scenario: a new left-leaning majority government.

The New Popular Front has the largest number of MPs in the National Assembly, but it still doesn't have the numbers for a majority government. So, if it wants to form government, it will have to secure MPs from the centre – a scenario that would be equally uncertain. Such a motley coalition would be in constant negotiations over bills.

The third scenario – possible but trickier – would see Macron re-appoint the fallen Barnier under the proviso he change the budget bill to appease the opposition and avoid another no confidence vote.

No matter what happens next, one thing remains certain: the next government is likely to be short-lived.

France could even see several governments fall until the next National Assembly elections, which cannot be scheduled before July 2025 at the earliest. Even then, a new election may not resolve the deep schism that has formed in French society since Macron's election in 2017.

Between 1947 and 1958, France had well over 20 governments. The country's political system survived, but it was a period of considerable tumult. The period that followed, however, was relatively stable, with strong, majority governments.

For now, the 2025 budget is a secondary issue. There will be no American-style government shutdown, as France operates differently: it will use the 2024 budget until a new government is in place.

However, as a member of the European Union, France is supposed to have a yearly budgetary deficit under 3 per cent. Currently, it is more than 5 per cent. Whichever government comes in next will face enormous pressure to reduce the government's deficit, which has greatly increased since the pandemic. The country also faces other economic challenges, including falling consumer confidence and slower growth.

And France will be faced with slightly higher interest rates when borrowing on the financial markets to finance its national debt. This means more taxpayer money will be directed towards refinancing the debt as opposed to being used for what the French think are priorities: the cost of living crisis, hospitals, education, police and other essential services. *—The Conversation*

PHOTO: X

## Japan's Sake joins UNESCO's cultural heritage list

**LUQUE, 5 DEC**

Sake is perhaps more Japanese than the world-famous sushi. It's brewed in centuries-old mountaintop warehouses, savoured in the country's pub-like izakayas, poured during weddings and served slightly chilled for special toasts. The smooth rice wine that plays a crucial role in Japan's culinary traditions was enshrined on Wednesday by UNESCO on its list of the "intangible cultural heritage of humanity." At a meeting in Luque, Paraguay, members of UNESCO's committee for safeguarding humanity's cultural heritage voted to recognise 45 cultural practices and products around the world, including Brazilian white cheese, Caribbean cassava bread and Palestinian olive oil soap. *—PTI*

## Rallies banned in Pak districts amid sectarian clashes

**PESHAWAR, 5 DEC**

A meeting of the local council leaders and administration on Thursday decided not to allow rallies or protests in the neighbouring districts of Kurram while a sustainable ceasefire agreement in Kohat division is expected soon in northwest Pakistan, officials said here. Kurram in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province has been rocked by sectarian clashes since last month that claimed 133 lives from 21 November to 2 December. The meeting of the grand jirga and the peace committee decided to completely ban holding rallies in Hangu, Kohat, and Orakzai districts, officials said. A ceasefire agreement in Kurram, banning rallies and protests, has been in place since 2 December and no incidents of violence have been reported since. The meeting between members of the grand jirga and the Kohat division peace committee is also expected to reach a sustainable ceasefire agreement in Kohat soon. *—PTI*

## Probe on in UnitedHealthcare's CEO murder in US

**NEW YORK, 5 DEC**

Investigators are searching for clues that could help them identify the masked gunman who stalked and killed the leader of one of the largest US health insurance companies, UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson on a Manhattan sidewalk, then disappeared into Central Park. Brian Thompson, who wad 50, died in a dawn ambush Wednesday as he walked to the company's annual investor conference at a Hilton in Midtown, blocks from tourist draws like Radio City Music Hall and the Museum of Modern Art. The killing, and the shooter's movements in the minutes before and afterward, were captured on some of the multitudes of security cameras present in that part of the city. The police department offered a reward of up to USD 10,000 for information leading to an arrest and conviction. *—PTI*

## 13 workers missing in ground collapse in China

**BEIJING/SHENZHEN, 5 DEC**

Thirteen workers were reported missing after a sudden ground collapse at a railway construction site in China's Shenzhen City, officials said on Thursday. The ground collapse occurred at around 11pm on Wednesday at a construction site of a section of the Shenzhen-Jiangmen Railway in the city's Bao'an District, state-run Xinhua news agency quoted local officials. An all-out rescue operation has been launched. Nearby residents have been evacuated and temporary traffic control has been carried out around the site. An investigation into the accident is underway, Xinhua reported. *—PTI*

# French PM resigns after losing No-Confidence vote

### No French govt had lost a confidence vote since 1962

**PARIS, 5 DEC**

In an unprecedented move, lawmakers from both the far-right and left in France united to pass a historic No-Confidence vote, leading to the resignation of Prime Minister Michel Barnier, marking the first such occurrence since 1962. The National Assembly approved the motion by a decisive 331 votes, surpassing the required 288.

Despite this political upheaval, President Emmanuel Macron has affirmed that he intends to serve the remainder of his term until 2027. Following the deeply fragmented parliamentary landscape created by July's elections, Macron is expected to appoint a new prime minister for the second time. Barnier, who was appointed just three months ago, will formally resign in the wake of this vote.

"I can tell you that it will remain an honour for me to have served France and the French with dignity," Barnier remarked in his final speech. He cautioned that the no-confidence motion would complicate governance further.

The no-confidence vote stemmed from intense opposition to Barnier's proposed budget, which critics argue imposes austerity measures and neglects the needs of citizens. The National Assembly, now composed of three main factions—Macron's centrist group, the left-wing New Popular Front, and the far-right National Rally—saw these usually opposing groups come together against Barnier.

French Prime Minister Michel Barnier. PHOTO: PTI

- Analysts warn that without major fiscal reforms, this could rise to 7 per cent next year, exacerbating economic concerns across the Eurozone

National Rally leader Marine Le Pen expressed the coalition's concerns, stating, "we had a choice to make, and our choice is to protect the French" from a "toxic" budget. She added that pressure on President Macron would intensify.

Macron's upcoming appointment of a new prime minister coincides with significant challenges posed by a divided parliament, as no further legislative elections can occur until July. Preparations are underway for an emergency law on taxes to avoid any fiscal disruptions by the year's end. He will be the shortest serving prime minister in modern French history. No French government had lost a confidence vote since Georges Pompidou's in 1962.

Political instability may potentially unsettle financial markets, as France grapples with a deficit projected to reach 6 per cent of its GDP this year. Analysts warn that without major fiscal reforms, this could rise to 7 per cent next year, exacerbating economic concerns across the Eurozone. *—PTI*

**MARTIAL LAW ROW**

# S Korea replaces Defence Minister

**SEOUL, 5 DEC**

Kim Yong Hyun PHOTO: X

South Korea's President Yoon Suk Yeol has replaced his Defence Minister, Kim Yong Hyun, amid escalating political turmoil following the brief and controversial declaration of martial law. The opposition Democratic Party and allied parties have initiated impeachment proceedings against Yoon in response to the military's six-hour presence on the streets of Seoul, which ended shortly after the National Assembly voted to overrule his decision.

The president announced his decision to replace Kim with Choi Byung Hyuk, a retired four-star general currently serving as South Korea's ambassador to Saudi Arabia. Vice Defence Minister Kim Seon Ho will serve as the acting minister until Choi is formally appointed.

The impeachment motion against Yoon was introduced in parliament early Thursday and could be voted on between Friday and Sunday.

The Democratic Party's spokesperson, Jo Seoung-lae, labelled the martial law declaration "unconstitutional" and called for a prompt vote. Meanwhile, lawmakers impeached several senior officials, including Choi Jae-hae, the chair of the Board of Audit and Inspection, amidst ongoing tensions with Yoon's conservative People Power Party (PPP).

Political analysts fear a repeat of the chaotic impeachment of former president Park Geun-hye in 2016, which left her party in disarray and ushered in a liberal presidency.

If approved, Yoon's impeachment would suspend his presidential powers until the Constitutional Court makes a ruling, temporarily delegating authority to Prime Minister Han Duck-soo. *—PTI*

## B'desh ICT bans dissemination of Hasina's remarks

**DHAKA, 5 DEC**

The International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) of Bangladesh on Thursday ordered the authorities to ban the dissemination of all the "hate speeches" of ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina in the media and on social networking platforms. The order follows Hasina's recent speech, her first public address after fleeing Bangladesh four months back, in which she mounted a stinging attack on the country's interim leader Muhammad Yunus, accusing him of perpetrating "genocide" and failing to protect minorities including Hindus.

Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha reported that a two-member tribunal passed the order and directed the authorities to remove all the "hate speeches" of Hasina from social media . In remarks delivered virtually to her supporters at an event in New York, Hasina also claimed that there were plans to kill her and her sister Sheikh Rehana just like their father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated in 1975. *—PTI*

**WAR RAGES ON**

Palestinians check the rubble of a destroyed building following an overnight Israeli strike in Gaza Strip PHOTO: PTI

## Israel committed genocide: Amnesty

**GAZA, 5 DEC**

Human rights group Amnesty International on Thursday said that Israel's war on Gaza meets the legal threshold for genocide.

The report titled, "You Feel Like You Are Subhuman": Israel's Genocide Against Palestinians in Gaza, is the culmination of months of research by Amnesty, including extensive witness interviews, analysis of "visual and digital evidence", including satellite imagery, and statements made by senior Israeli government and military officials.

Amnesty said Israel has committed at least three of the five acts banned by the 1948 Genocide Convention, including indiscriminate killings of civilians, causing serious bodily or mental harm, and "deliberately inflicting on Palestinians in Gaza conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction". Israel has "committed prohibited acts under the Genocide Convention, namely killing, causing serious bodily or mental harm, and deliberately inflicting on Palestinians in Gaza conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction" with the "specific intent to destroy Palestinians" in the territory, the report said.

It marks the first time Amnesty has alleged the crime of genocide during an ongoing conflict. *—Agencies*

## Ukraine sanctions Georgian leaders

**KYIV, 5 DEC**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Thursday sanctioned Georgian Prime Minister and others of the ruling party, in an attempt to halt the country's apparent drift into Russia's orbit.

Zelenskyy announced the sanctions on Thursday after a seventh consecutive night of protests against Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze's decision to delay talks on joining the European Union, a move thought to have been steered by Bidzina Ivanishvili, the country's wealthiest man who founded the governing party Georgian Dream. Speaking in a video, Zelenskyy said the sanctions against both figures and 17 other government members – including Georgia's state security service chief and interior minister – were "against the part of the government in Georgia that is handing Georgia over to (Russian President Vladimir) Putin". Ukraine, will impose 10-year restrictions on financial operations on entry to Ukraine and on property rights in Ukraine. *—Agencies*

Ukraine, will impose 10-year restrictions on financial operations on entry to Ukraine and on property rights in Ukraine PHOTO: PTI

## Georgian Oppn leader held for protest against govt

**TBILISI, 5 DEC**

Georgian police on Wednesday raided the offices of an Opposition party and arrested its leader in an apparent attempt to squelch a wave of mass protests triggered by the governing party's decision to suspend negotiations on joining the European Union.

During the past six nights, riot police used water cannons and tear gas to disperse the demonstrators, who threw fireworks at police officers and built barricades on the Georgian capital's central boulevard. More than 300 protesters have been detained since Thursday and over 100 people have been treated for injuries. On Wednesday, the Coalition for Change opposition party said that police raided its offices and detained its leader, Nika Gvaramia. It shared a video showing several officers dragging Gvaramia into a car.

Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze said the raids targeted those who encouraged violence during protests in an attempt to topple his government. "I wouldn't call this repression; it is more of a preventive measure than repression," he said. *—PTI*

## Syrian rebels enter Hama city after fighting

**BEIRUT, 5 DEC**

Syrian insurgents claimed to have entered parts of Hama on Thursday after three days of intense clashes with government forces on its outskirts. Syrian state media confirmed fighting on the eastern edges of the city but denied insurgent advances.

Hama, one of the few cities to remain under full government control since Syria's conflict began in 2011, is a key strategic point. Its capture would mark a significant setback for President Bashar Assad. The offensive, led by the jihadi group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army, follows their recent takeover of Aleppo, Syria's largest city. This marked the first opposition attack on Aleppo since 2016, when Russian-backed forces retook it for Assad.

The fighting has displaced many, reigniting a conflict that had been relatively stagnant. Insurgents, using the Telegram app, claimed to be advancing toward Hama's center, with reports from the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights suggesting opposition have entered the city's Sawaaeq and Zahiriyeh neighbourhoods. *—PTI*

## Iraq war veteran Driscoll is new US Army Secy

**WASHINGTON DC, 5 DEC**

President-elect Donald Trump has announced the appointment of Daniel P. Driscoll, a former soldier and Iraq War veteran, as his choice for Secretary of the Army. Driscoll, a North Carolina native, has been serving as a senior adviser to Vice President-elect JD Vance, a connection formed during their time at Yale Law School. In 2020, he ran unsuccessfully in the Republican primary for a congressional seat in North Carolina, garnering approximately 8% of the vote in a competitive field.

"Dan will be a fearless and relentless fighter for America's Soldiers and the America First agenda," Trump stated on his social media platform. If confirmed, the 38-year-old Driscoll will lead a military branch grappling with recruitment challenges and embarking on a comprehensive overhaul of its programmes and staffing as well as modernising its weapons systems. His military accolades include the Army Commendation Medal and the Combat Action Badge. *—PTI*

Donald Trump PHOTO: X

### New bill introduced to reunite immigrant families in the US

**Washington, 5 DEC**

Two Democratic Senators, Mazie K Hirono and Tammy Duckworth, have unveiled the Reuniting Families Act, aimed at reforming the US immigration system to enhance family unity. The legislation seeks to reduce family-based immigration backlogs, raise per-country visa caps—benefiting nations like India and China—and include exemptions for close relatives. Additionally, it incorporates the Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act to expedite visa processes for children of Filipino World War II veterans. Advocates argue that the bill addresses long-standing barriers, fostering a more equitable immigration system. *—PTI*

**IN 2 OPERATIONS**

## *Mexico seizes record Fentanyl amid US pressure*

**MEXICO, 5 DEC**

Mexico has announced its largest-ever seizure of fentanyl, amid increasing cross-border pressure to combat drug trafficking into the United States. Omar Garcia Harfuch, the country's Secretary of Security and Citizen Protection, revealed on Wednesday that "more than a tonne of fentanyl pills" were confiscated during two operations in the coastal state of Sinaloa. Two men were arrested and firearms were also seized.

This significant seizure comes on the heels of the Mexican government detaining over 5,200 migrants and asylum seekers, further indicating a response to pressures from the incoming administration of President-elect Donald Trump. Trump has threatened to impose a hefty 25-percent tariff on goods from both Mexico and Canada unless substantial action is taken to reduce drug trafficking and immigration across the shared borders.

The drug bust comes amid Mexico detaining 5,200 migrants and asylum seeker PHOTO: USSTATESDRUGENFORCEMENTADMINISTRATION

Security analyst David Saucedo suggested that these latest measures reflect "pressure from Washington". President Claudia Sheinbaum later described the seizure as the culmination of prolonged investigations, asserting, "This is an investigation that had been going on for some time." The fentanyl crisis is a pressing concern for the US, with the synthetic opioid identified as a leading cause of overdose deaths. The US Drug Enforcement Administration has labelled it "100 times more potent" than morphine. However, prior to this major seizure, statistics indicated a significant drop in fentanyl confiscations in Mexico, prompting calls for authorities to dismantle production labs to effectively curtail the illicit trade. Saucedo emphasised the need to address the root causes of the fentanyl trade for effective long-term solutions. *—Al Jazeera*

## US accuses China of metadata theft

**WASHINGTON, 5 DEC**

A significant cyber-espionage campaign attributed to Chinese hackers has compromised metadata from numerous Americans, focusing on at least eight telecommunications firms in the United States, according to government officials.

Deputy National Security Adviser Anne Neuberger revealed that the hacking collective, known as Salt Typhoon, managed to infiltrate communications of senior US government officials and political figures; however, she assured that classified communications remained secure. A senior official disclosed that "the Chinese government" has concentrated its efforts on a substantial number of individuals globally, targeting dozens of telecom companies. In October, federal authorities confirmed that individuals associated with the Chinese hacking group targeted then-presidential candidate Donald Trump and his running mate JD Vance, along with others close to Vice President Kamala Harris.

While previous allegations have implicated Chinese hackers in infiltrating major providers like Verizon, AT&T, and T-Mobile, both T-Mobile and Lumen have insisted that there is no evidence suggesting that customer data was accessed. Chinese embassy dismissed claims of responsibility, calling for an end to US cyberattacks against other nations. *—Al Jazeera*

## Rupee closes at 84.72 against USD after all-time low

MUMBAI, 5 DEC

The rupee recovered from its all-time low level and settled for the day with gains of just 3 paise at 84.72 (provisional) against the US dollar in a range-bound trade on Thursday, amid a positive trend in domestic equities. Forex traders said the Indian rupee recovered slightly on strength in the domestic markets and overnight decline in crude oil prices. However, a positive US dollar capped a sharp upside. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 84.72, moved in a narrow range and touched an intraday high of 84.70 and a low of 84.74 against the greenback. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

## Gold climbs ₹300 to reclaim ₹79K-mark

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

Gold price surged to reclaim the Rs 79,000-level in the national capital on Thursday due to fresh buying by jewellers and stockists, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Snapping its three-day losing run, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity rose Rs 300 to Rs 79,150 per 10g from the previous close of Rs 78,850 per 10g on Wednesday. Traders said gold climbed due to fresh demand by jewellers and retailers in the local markets. Silver continued to shine for the third straight day by jumping Rs 1,300 to Rs 93,800 per kg on Thursday. It ended at Rs 92,500 per kg on Wednesday. Price of gold of 99.5 per cent purity advanced Rs 300 to Rs 78,750 per 10g. It settled at Rs 78,450 per 10g in the previous trading session. —*PTI*

## Aurobindo USFDA nod for generic cancer drug

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

Aurobindo Pharma on Thursday said its subsidiary has received approval from the US health regulator to market a cancer treatment medication in the US. Eugia Pharma Specialities, a wholly-owned unit of the company, has received final approval from the US Food & Drug Administration (USFDA) to manufacture and market Pazopanib Tablets (200 mg) in the US market, the Hyderabad-based drug maker said in a regulatory filing. The company's product is therapeutically equivalent to Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation's Votrient tablets (200 mg), it added. The product is expected to be launched in Q4FY25, the drug maker said. According to IQVIA data, the product has an estimated market size of USD 106 million for the 12-month period ended October 2024. —*PTI*

## Hyundai Motors announces price hike from 2025

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

Leading automobile manufacturer, Hyundai Motor India Limited (HMIL) has announced price increases across their model ranges, effective 1 January, 2025. The revisions are attributed to rising input, logistics, and transportation costs, along with adverse exchange rates. Hyundai Motor India Limited revealed that prices for its Model Year 2025 (MY25) vehicles will increase by up to Rs 25,000. The increase will be applied across Hyundai's extensive range of offerings, ensuring customers are informed well in advance. Earlier, On 2 December, Audi India announced a 3 per cent price increase across its lineup, citing rising input and transportation costs. With Hyundai and Audi joining the list of brands announcing price revisions, other automakers are likely to follow suit in the coming weeks. —*PTI*

# Sensex surges 809 points ahead of RBI policy review

### Tata, Titan, Infosys and Bharti Airtel are the biggest gainers

MUMBAI, 5 DEC

Rising for the fifth straight day, benchmark BSE Sensex spurted by 809 points in a choppy trade on Thursday a day ahead of the announcement of the RBI policy review.

The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 809.53 points, or 1 per cent, to settle at 81,765.86. During the day, it soared 1,361.41 points, or 1.68 per cent, to 82,317.74 but pared gains in the pre-close session on profit-taking by investors.

The NSE Nifty surged 240.95 points, or 0.98 per cent, to 24,708.40.

Analysts said benchmark indices maintained their winning run for the fifth day following buying in IT stocks and a rally in the US markets.

From the 30-share Sensex pack, Tata Consultancy Services, Titan, Infosys, Bharti Airtel, Bajaj Finance, ICICI Bank, HCL Technologies, and Tech Mahindra were the biggest gainers.

NTPC and Asian Paints were the laggards.

"Dow moving past 45,000 for the first time is an indicator of the strength of the US market rally. The macro construct in the US -- strong growth and declining inflation support this rally.

"The Fed chief Powell's remark yesterday that the 'economy is in remarkably good shape' is a shot in the arm for the US bulls," V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said.

The BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.27 per cent and the smallcap index went up by 0.16 per cent. —*PTI*

NTPC and Asian Paints were the laggards PHOTO: PTI

As many as 2,141 stocks advanced while 1,825 declined and 117 remained unchanged on the BSE.

Among sectoral indices, BSE Focused IT soared the most 1.96 per cent, while teck jumped 1.92 per cent, IT by 1.81 per cent and telecommunication 0.95 per cent. Bankex (0.68 per cent) and consumer durables (0.66 per cent) also advanced.

BSE services and realty emerged as the laggards.

In the past five trading days, the BSE benchmark has jumped 2,722.12 points or 3.44 per cent.

FIIs turning buyers is positive for markets, particularly for largecaps, analysts said. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 1,797.60 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data.

In Asian markets, Tokyo, and Shanghai settled higher while Seoul and Hong Kong ended lower.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude went up 0.53 per cent to USD 72.68 a barrel. —*PTI*

JOB CREATON IN FOCUS

PHOTO: X

# WB grants $188M loan for M'rashtra

WASHINGTON DC, 5 DEC

The World Bank has approved a USD 188.28M loan to stimulate economic growth in Maharashtra, especially in the lagging districts, the bank said in a statement.

The Maharashtra Strengthening Institutional Capabilities in Districts for Enabling Growth Operation will support district planning and growth strategies, it said.

Investments under the operation will equip districts with the necessary data, funds, and expertise to maximise the value of public money employed for driving growth and job creation. It will also enhance private sector participation by improving e-government services for businesses in districts, especially in the tourism sector, the bank said.

"By providing well-articulated investments in institutional capability and coordination at the district level, the program will enhance evidence-based planning and policymaking, efficient public sector interface with the private sector, and improved service delivery to the public – all of which are the fulcrum of broad-based growth, especially in lagging districts," said Auguste Tano Kouamé, the World Bank's Country Director for India.

The operation will unlock the value of public data by building a data governance architecture including the Maha Databank for better coordination and dissemination of insights into state development. —*PTI*

# Forex reserves decline amid RBI currency moves

MUMBAI, 5 DEC

The recent decline in India's forex reserve from USD 705 billion to USD 656.58 billion is because the central bank is using forex reserve to manage currency volatility says a report by Union Bank of India.

The report says that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is actively working on curtailing currency volatility as persistent dollar outflows have put pressure on the Indian Rupee.

It noted that persistent foreign portfolio investor (FPI) outflows from the equity market have pushed the rupee to record lows. To manage the situation, the RBI has been utilizing its forex reserves, which dropped to USD 656.58 billion as of the week ended 22 November.

It said "Persistent FPIs outflows from equity market has led the Rupee depreciate to record highs. However, our Central Bank is likely curtailing volatility through utilization of Fx Reserves".

PHOTO: X

This marks a decline of USD 1.31 billion for the week. Notably, forex reserves have fallen by USD 48.30 billion from their peak of USD 705 billion.

The report also sheds light on the government's fiscal position, stating that for the first time since April 2023, the government's balance slipped into Ways and Means Advances (WMA) as of 15 November.

However, it recovered to Rs 1.3 lakh crore by the week ended 22 November. The report attributed this improvement to month-end government spending, which supported liquidity and is expected to bring the system back into a positive zone by early December. —*ANI*

REDUCED CUSTOMER DEMAND

# Apparel industry slams proposed GST hike

KOLKATA, 5 DEC

The apparel industry has expressed serious concerns over the proposed GST rate hike recommended by the Group of Ministers on rate rationalisation.

Under the new tax structure, garments priced between Rs 1,500 and Rs 10,000 would be taxed at 18 per cent, while apparel above Rs 10,000 would fall under the highest GST slab of 28 per cent. The rate for apparel priced up to Rs 1,500 would remain at five per cent.

The Clothing Manufacturers Association of India (CMAI) has urged the government to reconsider the hike, warning that it could lead to reduced consumer demand, widespread job losses and disruptions in the industry's value chain. "The proposed GST rate hike risks severely disrupting the formal retail sector by pushing both consumers and businesses toward informal channels. This shift would hurt legitimate retailers and potentially benefit unscrupulous sellers and illegal merchants. The textile industry, already under strain, could face job losses of up to one lakh," the CMAI said in a statement. The association suggested that a uniform GST rate of five per cent would be more practical and beneficial for the industry, urging the government to at least maintain continuity in the existing rates. "The proposed GST rate revisions pose a significant threat to the apparel industry as a whole, which is already facing challenges such as declining consumer demand, profit erosion and working capital issues. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

## Experts demand tax relief for imported artefacts

MATHURA, 5 DEC

At the 106th National Convention of the Indian Numismatic Society here, experts called for the removal or reduction of customs duty on bringing back valuable artefacts and cultural heritage from abroad.

They argued that such measures would encourage individuals and organisations to restore India's cultural legacy.

The convention was organised by the Uttar Pradesh State Archaeology Department.

"India imposes 33 per cent customs duty on bringing back its heritage, whereas the UK and the US not only waive such charges but also honour and encourage those who undertake such efforts," Farukh S Todiwala, a member of the Indian Numismatic Society's Executive Council, told reporters.

Todiwala said repeated requests have been made to the government to address this issue, but in vain. —*PTI*

# CEA forecasts 7% growth in FY25

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran on Thursday said economic activity in some sectors have picked up pace during October–November, and a GDP growth of 6.5–7 per cent in the current fiscal is feasible.

Nageswaran also said the 5.4 per cent second quarter GDP growth estimate could be revised upwards going forward, as the current estimates are not seasonally adjusted. "In reacting to these numbers, I don't think we should throw the baby out with the bathwater. Because the underlying growth story still remains very much intact," he said.

India's economic growth slowed to a seven-quarter low of 5.4 per cent in the July–September quarter, from 6.7 per cent in the April–June quarter.

Anantha Nageswaran. PHOTO: PTI

Nageswaran said the slowdown in GDP growth in the second quarter could be because of some "religious observances" in September, excess monsoon rainfall and other more long-standing issues that are beginning to emerge, he said. This is the first estimate for second quarter GDP growth. —*PTI*

## Nykaa Fashion CEO Parikh quits with immediate effect

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

Nykaa Fashion chief executive officer Nihir Parikh has resigned and has been relieved with immediate effect, a regulatory filing said on Thursday.

Nykaa Fashion is the fashion vertical of FSN E-commerce Ventures Ltd.

The fashion vertical accounts for less than 10 per cent of the company's revenue.

The beauty segment of the company accounts for the majority of the revenue. Nykaa Fashion is still a loss-making vertical.

The company has posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 12.97 crore and revenue of Rs 1,874 crore for September 2024 quarter. —*PTI*

# Myntra now to deliver in 30 minutes

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

Fashion and lifestyle e-commerce platform Myntra on Thursday announced the launch of its quick commerce service 'M-Now', which promises delivery within 30 minutes.

Currently operational in Bengaluru, M-Now is set to expand to a mix of metro and non-metro cities across the country in the coming months, according to Myntra CEO Nandita Sinha.

This makes Myntra among the first fashion and lifestyle-centric brands to enter quick commerce.

M-Now will address the 'here and now' demand for branded lifestyle products of the demanding customer by offering access to sought-after international and domestic brands in as little as 30 minutes, delivering almost real-time gratification, a company statement said.

Offering over 10,000 product selections across fashion, beauty, accessories and home, M-Now is slated to be scaled to over 1 lakh styles in the next 3-4 months.

Customers will have access to a range of global brands on M-Now, including Vero Moda, MANGO, Tommy Hilfiger, Levi's, ONLY, Olaplex, Dyson, Armani Exchange, Fossil, Caso, Mokobara, Huda Beauty, MAC, Bobbi Brown, and Estee Lauder.

In November, Myntra piloted M-Now in select pin codes of Bengaluru to test its feasibility.

Unlike most quick commerce platforms, M-Now will provide a window for returns and exchanges. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

- Offering over 10,000 product selections across fashion, beauty, M-Now is slated to be scaled to 1 lakh styles in next months

74% STAKE OVERALL

# *Fairfax India to buy 10% stake in BIAL*

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

Fairfax India Holdings will buy an additional 10 per cent stake in Bengaluru airport operator Bangalore International Airport Ltd (BIAL), hiking its overall shareholding to 74 per cent. BIAL is a joint venture between Fairfax India, Airports Authority of India (AAI) and Karnataka State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. The latter two entities have 13 per cent stake each.

"The transaction is expected to close in Q1 2025, upon which the additional 10 per cent equity interest in BIAL will be acquired by Fairfax India for, in aggregate, USD 255 million. The purchase price will be payable in three installments, with the initial installment to be paid on the closing date in Q1 2025," Fairfax India said in a release. The second and third installments are to be paid on or around 31 August, 2025 and 31 July 2026, respectively. Fairfax India is acquiring the 10 per cent stake from Siemens Projects Ventures.

"We would like to thank Siemens for the great partnership we have enjoyed since our initial investment in BIAL in 2017. This additional investment in BIAL is a testament to our belief in the continued growth opportunities presented by BIAL and a phenomenal track record demonstrated by Hari Marar and his management team in capitalising on those opportunities," Prem Watsa, Canada-based billionaire and Founder of Fairfax India, said in the release.

BIAL, under a concession agreement with the Indian government till 2068, has the exclusive rights to carry out the development, design, financing, construction, commissioning, maintenance, operation and management of the Kempegowda International Airport Bengaluru. KIAB is the first greenfield airport in India built through a public-private partnership, according to the release dated 3 December. —*PTI*

PHOTO: TWITTER/@BLRAIRPORT

# WeWork opens B'luru centre with 1L desks

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

Co-working major WeWork India on Thursday said it has opened a new centre in Bengaluru comprising 1.10 lakh sq feet office space, helping the company reach an operational portfolio of 1 lakh desks.

Since its inception in India in 2016, WeWork India has expanded across 62 locations across eight cities - Chennai, New Delhi, Gurugram, Noida, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Pune, and Hyderabad, a company statement said.

"We opened our first building in 2017 in Bengaluru, and have since expanded across eight cities. As we open another building in Bengaluru, it gives us absolute joy to hit the 1 lakh+ desk with the same city," said Arnav S Gusain, Chief of Supply, WeWork India. "As the demand for flexible workspaces continues to rise, we aim to empower businesses to scale, and achieve sustained growth with our comprehensive suite of services," he added. WeWork India will soon open two new centres in Gurugram and Chennai. In Gurugram, the company will have over 1,400 desks across 1.17 lakh sq ft. In Chennai, there will be 1,900 desks spread across 1.26 lakh square feet. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

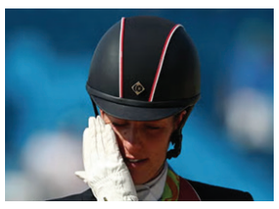


PHOTO: X

## Equestrian champion Dujardin handed 1-year ban

**LAUSANNE, 5 DEC**

Three-time Olympic equestrian gold medalist Charlotte Dujardin was suspended from all competition for one year on Thursday following a horse-whipping scandal that saw her withdraw from the Paris Games in July. Dujardin was provisionally suspended by the International Federation for Equestrian Sports on July 23 as the governing body launched an investigation into a video from four years ago showing her repeatedly whipping a horse while coaching another rider. A complaint was made to the FEI by Dutch equine lawyer Stephan Wensing on behalf of an unnamed client.—*PTI*

## German coach Altenburg joins Kalinga Lancers

**BHUBANESWAR, 5 DEC**

Valentin Altenburg, who led Germany to a bronze medal at the 2016 Rio Olympics, was on Thursday named the head of Vedanta Kalinga Lancers' coaching staff for the upcoming Hockey India League. A respected figure in international hockey with over a decade of experience, the 43-year-old is the youngest senior men's coach in Germany's hockey history. He has also guided the national team to silver medals at the European Championships in 2019 and 2021, and a bronze in 2023. "I've always admired Indian hockey, and I'm grateful to the Vedanta Kalinga Lancers for giving me this opportunity," Altenburg was quoted as saying in a release.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

## Theegala dream journey inspires Indian golfers

**ALBANY, 5 DEC**

The GenAm accent will instantly reveal Sahith Theegala as a born American. But he has not snapped the emotional umbilical cord with India and nourishes the dream of inspiring a new crop of golfers in his ancestral land. Theegala, whose parents Muralidhar and Karuna had migrated to the US from Hyderabad in the mid-1980s, is one of the three Indian-origin golfers featuring in the ongoing Hero World Challenge along with Akshay Bhatia and Aaron Rai. But among them, Theegala, the World No. 12, has an unmissable Indianness about him primarily because his parents have visited the motherland at a compulsory annual event.—*PTI*

## Modi lauds junior hockey team's unmatched skill

**NEW DELHI, 5 DEC**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday lauded the Indian hockey team for winning the men's junior Asia Cup, saying their unmatched skill, unwavering grit, and incredible teamwork have etched this victory into the annals of sporting glory. He said on X, "Proud of our hockey champions! It's a historic moment for Indian hockey as our Men's Junior Team wins the Junior Asia Cup 2024 title. Their unmatched skill, unwavering grit, and incredible teamwork have etched this win into the annals of sporting glory." Araijeet Singh Hundal slammed four goals as defending champions India defeated arch-rivals Pakistan 5-3 in the summit clash to win a hat-trick of titles in the men's junior Asia Cup in Muscat—*PTI*

# CT hybrid model finalised, same plan for all ICC events

**NEW DELHI, 5 DEC**

The International Cricket Council has reached a consensus to conduct next year's Champions Trophy in a hybrid model, allowing India to play its share of matches in Dubai while agreeing "in principle" to a similar arrangement in multi-lateral events till 2027.

According to a top ICC source, the decision was more or less finalised during an informal meeting between the body's new President Jay Shah, and the Board of Directors, including Pakistan, at its headquarters in Dubai on Thursday."It's been agreed in principle by all parties that the 2025 Champions Trophy will be held in the UAE and Pakistan with India playing its matches in Dubai. It's a win-win situation for all stakeholders," the ICC source told PTI.

The Champions Trophy is to be held in February-March next year.Pakistan, while withdrawing its boycott threat

and agreeing to go hybrid in the previous ICC meet last week, had demanded a reciprocal arrangement for itself till 2031.

However, the ICC has agreed to a hybrid model for all its events till 2027.During this period, India will be hosting the women's ODI World Cup in October this year and the 2026 men's T20 World Cup jointly with Sri Lanka.Given the hosting arrangement, Pakistan would not have been compelled to travel to India if they had insisted against it in 2026 even if a hybrid model was not in place."During the 2026 men's T20 World Cup, Pakistan will play its matches in Sri Lanka. The compensation demanded by PCB for the Champions Trophy hybrid model is still under consideration," the source said. Agreeing to this arrangement means that the Indian women's team will have to travel to a neutral venue to play their league match against Pakistan, should that be necessitated by the schedule which is yet to come out."Cricket should win, that's most important but with respect for all. We are going to do what's best for cricket. Whichever formula we go for, it would be on equal terms," Pakistan Cricket Board head Mohsin Naqvi had stated after the last ICC meet. The latest development will clear the decks for the release of the Champions Trophy schedule which has been long awaited by fans and broadcasters, Star Sports.As per the contract between the ICC and the broadcaster, the governing body was expected to give the schedule of the tournament at least 90 days in advance but that deadline has already been breached. —*PTI*

# India aims to prove a point in pink ball Test

## KL will open innings and I will bat in the middle: Rohit Sharma

India captain Rohit Sharma PHOTO: PTI

**ADELAIDE, 5 DEC**

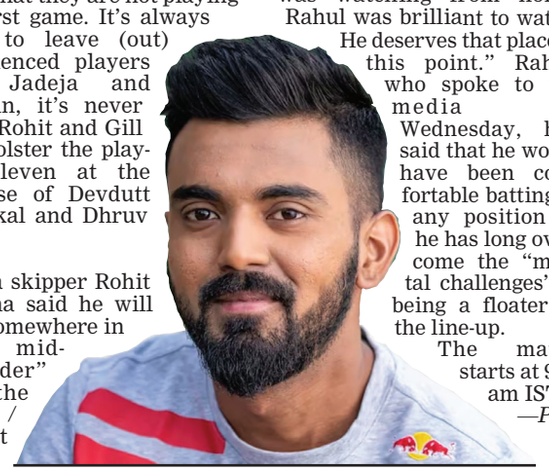
Rohit Sharma will take a step back to lead from the front as India looks for the perfect combination to drive home the advantage against a wounded but famously resilient Australia in the day/night Test starting here on Friday.

Rohit, returning to the side from a brief paternity break, has taken the tough call of pushing himself down the order to accommodate K L Rahul at the top alongside Yashasvi Jaiswal. Both Rahul and Jaiswal excelled in Perth and had a big part in India's biggest overseas win.

Shubman Gill has recovered from a thumb injury and will be back in the side alongside Rohit. The resourceful side would be happy to have the headache of having to shuffle the side rather than being under-strength, which was the case when they last toured and beat all expectations to come out trumps. "We want results, we want success. Those two guys at the top they batted brilliantly in Perth. I was watching from home. Rahul was brilliant to watch. He deserves that place at this point. "There is no need to change that now, maybe things will be different in the future. Personally not easy for me (to move down) but for the team it made a lot of sense," said Rohit adding that he will bat somewhere in the middle.

Playing Australia in Australia tends to bring the best out of the visiting Indian team which defied all expectations to boss the series-opener in Perth, handing Australia their first loss at the Optus stadium.

India captain Rohit Sharma on Thursday endorsed the exclusion of Ravindra Jadeja and Ravichandran Ashwin from the first Test against Australia at Perth, saying it was the "right thing to do" but backed the two veterans to play a "huge role" in the rest of the series. Coming off a 0-3 hammering to New Zealand at home, India took an audacious call to leave out Ashwin and Jadeja while handing Test debuts to Harshit Rana and Nitish Reddy. The decision paid rich dividends as both the young players made vital contributions to India's 295-run win. Rohit told the media on the eve of the second Test here, "Unfortunately, I was not there to bring this news to them that they are not playing the first game. It's always hard to leave (out) experienced players like Jadeja and Ashwin, it's never easy."Rohit and Gill will bolster the playing eleven at the expense of Devdutt Padikkal and Dhruv Jurel.



India skipper Rohit Sharma said he will bat "somewhere in the middle-order" in the day/night Test against Australia starting here on Friday, allowing K L Rahul to continue in the opening slot.

Rahul looked solid, scoring 26 and 77, and he and centurion Yashasvi Jaiswal combined for a 201-run opening stand during the second innings of the first Test in Perth, which India won by 295 runs.

"He (Rahul) will open the innings. I will play somewhere in the middle," Rohit told reporters on the eve of the second Test. Rohit is returning to the side after a short paternity break due to the birth of his son. The skipper said that continuity would benefit the team. "We want results, we want success. Those two guys at the top they batted brilliantly in Perth. I was watching from home. Rahul was brilliant to watch. He deserves that place at this point." Rahul, who spoke to the media on Wednesday, had said that he would have been comfortable batting at any position as he has long overcome the "mental challenges" of being a floater in the line-up.

The match starts at 9.30 am IST. —*PTI*

## Victory is one last thing to tick off for a lot of us: Cummins

**ADELAIDE, 5 DEC**

He has won the ODI World Cup, the Ashes and also the Test Championship mace but the Border-Gavaskar Trophy against India remains the "one last" unchecked item on the bucket list of Australia skipper Pat Cummins, who is confident of pulling it off this time despite the opening Test debacle.Cummins, who made his Test debut in 2011, played a Test against India for the first time in 2017. Since 2014-15, Australia has not won an India series either at home or away. The pacer is determined to change this stat despite the 295-run drubbing in the Perth game last month. "For half of the (Australian) change room, we haven't won the Border Gavaskar Trophy. It is one last thing to tick off for a lot of us. Almost every challenge that we faced in last few years, we have stepped up and done well," Cummins spoke with a lot of determination on the eve of the second Test against India in Adelaide. "I think we need to do that for another home summer and series. —*PTI*

## HEAD-TO-HEAD RECORD

**ADELAIDE, 5 DEC**

In Australia, India have played 53 Tests, winning only 10 and losing 30. Notably, 5 of those 10 victories have come in the last 2 tours and the ongoing one. Australia have won 11 out of the 12 pink-ball Tests they have played so far, with the loss coming against West Indies earlier in 2024. India have won 3 out of 4 Day-Night Tests, with their only loss being the one in Adelaide during the 2020-21 series when they got bowled out for 36 in the second innings.. —PTI

SYED MUSHTAQ ALI TROPHY

# Abhishek Sharma slams 28-ball 100 in T20 history

**INDORE, 5 DEC**

Records tumbled in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy on Thursday when Baroda smashed the highest score in T20 history and Punjab's Abhishek Sharma slammed a blazing 28-ball hundred, equalling the fastest such knock by an Indian in the format.

Both those records came against weaker teams in domestic cricket.

Baroda hammered 349 for five in 20 overs against Sikkim in Indore while Sharma's blitzkrieg came against Meghalaya in Rajkot, equalling the record for the fastest hundred by an Indian.

Gujarat's Urvil Patel too has a 28-ball hundred to his credit and it also came during a Syed Mushtaq Ali match, against Tripura.

Sharma remained not out on 106 off 29 balls as Punjab chased down the 143-run target in just 9.3 overs. The southpaw hit as many as 11 sixes and six fours in his ballistic innings.

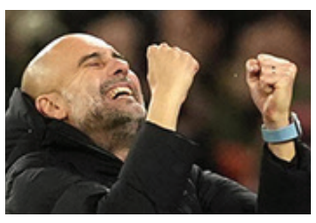
The record for the fastest T20 hundred is held by Estonia's Sahil Chauhan, who smashed a 27-ball ton against Cyprus earlier this year.

In Indore, Baroda also hit a record 37 sixes in their mammoth total, which was also the first 300-plus T20 team score by an Indian outfit.

Their number three Bhanu Pania was the most destructive batter with an unbeaten 51-ball 134, which was dotted with five fours and 11 sixes.

Baroda won the game by 263 runs after Sikkim struggled to 86 for seven in the run chase. —*PTI*

Abhishek Sharma slammed a blazing 28-ball 100



Pep Guardiola PHOTO: X

## Man City needs to break losing 'routine': Pep

**LONDON, 5 DEC**

Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola said his side was in dire need of breaking its seven-game winless streak after it beat Nottingham, Forest 3-0 in the Premier League on Wednesday. The English champion's barren run was the worst run Guardiola has endured in his managerial career.

It included six defeats and a draw in the Champions League. However, the victory on Wednesday came at the cost of injuries to defenders Nathan Ake and Manuel Akanji."We needed it. The club, the players needed to win but it is just one game," said Guardiola."The problems continue with Manu and Nathan. In general, the most important thing was to break this routine of not winning games and finally we won, but we have to continue," he added. —*PTI*

## World Chess C'ship: 9th game between Gukesh and Liren ends in a draw

**SINGAPORE, 5 DEC**

Stalemate continued in the World Chess Championship as the ninth game between Indian challenger D Gukesh and defending champion Ding Liren of China ended in yet another draw to still level on points here on Thursday.

The sixth consecutive draw and seventh of the match left both players on an identical tally of 4.5 points each, still shy of 3 points in order to win the championship.

The two players signed peace after 54 moves. Friday is a rest day and they will resume the battle on Saturday.

Just five more classical games are left to be played in the USD 2.5 million prize money championship and if a tied result happens after 14 rounds, there will be games under faster time control to determine the winner.

The 32-year-old Liren had won the opening game while the 18-year-old Gukesh had emerged victorious in the third game.

The second, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth games had ended in draws.

The Catalan opening has featured in top-level games for many decades now and Gukesh chose it this time to test Liren's preparation. —*PTI*

Ding Liren and Gukesh D during World Chess Championship 2024 PHOTO: X

## BUMRAH AMONG PLAYERS NOMINATED FOR ICC PLAYER OF THE MONTH

**DUBAI, 5 DEC**

Jasprit Bumrah was on Thursday nominated as one of the three contenders to win the ICC Player of the Month award for November following his magnificent performance in India's massive win by 295 runs over Australia in Perth while captaining the side.

Bumrah led the Indian team in the absence of skipper Rohit Sharma, who missed the series opener of the five-match Test rubber due to the birth of his second child.

The peerless fast bowler was nominated along with South African left-arm seamer Marco Jansen and Pakistan's Haris Rauf. Bumrah returned to the top of the ICC men's Test bowling rankings in November and aims to win his second Player of the Month award. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

PREMIER LEAGUE

# *Arsenal's victory ends Amorim's unbeaten MU start*

**LONDON, 5 DEC**

Manchester United manager Ruben Amorim hailed Arsenal as one of the best set-piece teams he has ever faced following the 2-0 defeat at Arsenal. The Gunners took two points out of Liverpool's lead at the summit of the Premier League after Jurrien Timber and William Saliba struck in the second half both from corners to condemn Amorim to his first defeat as United boss.

The hosts' second-half strikes took their goals-from-corners tally to 22 since the start of last season – a statistic that is unmatched by any other team in the division. Asked if Arsenal are one of the best teams he has come up against on corners, Amorim replied: "If you follow the Premier League for a long time you can see that. "They are also big players and you see every occasion when Martinelli and Saka have one-on-ones, a lot of times they go outside and they cross, and they know that if the cross goes well, they can score, and if it is a corner they can score, too, so we have to be better on that.

"You have seen in all Arsenal games that every team has had problems with that. And the difference today was the set pieces.

"You see a goal and then the momentum changed, and it is really hard for us to take full control of the game after that." Timber leaned into Rasmus Hojlund at the front post before diverting Declan Rice's set-piece into the back of Andre Onana's net after 54 minutes to send Arsenal into the lead. —*PTI*

William Saliba scored in Arsenal's 2-0 win over Manchester United PHOTO: X/ @MANCHESTERUNITED

## Junior Asia Cup: India colts set sights on WC

**BENGALURU, 5 DEC**

A few tough matches tested the junior Indian hockey team during its successful title defense at the Junior Asia Cup and now the players are determined to do well in next year's men's World Cup at home.

The team returned to Bengaluru on Thursday after a stellar campaign in Muscat, Oman, where they defeated arch-rivals Pakistan 5-3 in a thrilling final.This victory follows India's bronze medal finish at the Sultan of Johor Cup under head coach PR Sreejesh.

"This is truly a proud moment for all of us, and we now look forward to the Junior World Cup in Chennai with great anticipation," vice-captain Rohit said.

"Every player contributed to this remarkable victory, and our collective effort has been truly inspiring. The tough matches, especially against Japan and Pakistan, tested our mettle, but we stayed focused and executed our game plan," he added.

Placed in Pool A, India secured dominant wins over Thailand, Chinese Taipei, and Korea, before overcoming a tough challenge against Japan with a 3-2 victory. —*PTI*